BING

WINTER 2003

No. 135

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

BING MAGAZINE (INCORPORATING BINGANG)

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

Web sites:

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BING magazine:	http://members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:	www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

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Special Distribution: Gonzaga University - Hofstra University - Library of Congress

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2004 are:

USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
UK	£12 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£13 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
South America / South Africa / Singapore / Japan	£15 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of:
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars
(c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Gun Damo in £ sterling.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor and / or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC.

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EDITORIAL

As the former editor of *BINGANG,* I am pleased and excited to be a part of the team that will prepare the coming issues of *BING.* Although this will be only for approximately one year, when a replacement will be named, I am looking forward to helping set the standards and policies for future issues of our journal.

Club Crosby and the International Crosby Circle have collectively spent about 120 years following Bing's life, career, and accomplishments. That is a remarkable achievement, and we can all be proud of that record. It has always seemed to me that the two clubs were partners, rather than competitors, in our goals. Now, with the merger, we are truly one organization, capable of doing much more than we could have done as separate clubs.

We have come a long way since the early days of fan club newsletters, when everything was typed on mimeograph stencils, printed on hand-cranked machines. and assembled around somebody's dining room table. The computer, with its myriad of type faces and sizes. and the modern printing facilities that are available have added a new dimension to our work.

Although we are depending heavily on the authors who have been writing for the two clubs during the past few years, we want to give all of you a chance to express your thoughts and ideas about Bing. If you have an idea for an article about Bing, let us know about it. We would certainly be interested in printing it in the journal. We also need your reactions to all matters concerning the journal and its contents. Let us know what you like about it and what you don't like. Be constructive - but honest - in your comments. You can send your articles, comments, and any other material to either Malcolm or me. You can be certain that they will be shared between the two of us.

For many years, our Bing Crosby fans signed their letters to one another "Bingcerely yours." That sounds very old-fashioned these days, but let's do it for old times' sake!

Bingcerely,
Wayne L. Martin

So here we are – an exciting new era and the first magazine for the expanded club. It is a real pleasure to welcome all the members of Club Crosby and the International Crosby Circle. Our world-wide Crosbyana family continues to expand and it is our ambition to deliver a publication which will continue this trend and perpetuate Bing's legacy and memory for the generations to come.

Our guiding principles for *BING* magazine are:

- The magazine is intended to cater for all who enjoy Bing – from the collector to the connoisseur to the critic to the casual fan.
- The pages of the magazine will be open to anyone with something to contribute to the memory and reputation of Bing.
- The magazine will not seek to criticise other singers and other types of music.

- The magazine is yours. As Wayne has said, we welcome your views, your articles and anything else you can offer.

It will take time for us to get the balance of the magazine right so please be patient as we try to reflect opinions and developments from all over the world.

So what will you find in this issue? The death of Bob Hope so soon after his centennial was a huge blow but probably not unexpected. Greg Van Beek has penned a sincere tribute to the man who will forever be closely associated with Bing. Bing's centennial tributes have continued and we have news of major events from diverse parts of the USA. Howard Crosby, Bing's nephew, contributes the second part of his article about 'Uncle Bing', 'Wig' Wiggins' gives us some Bing vignettes, Pete Cakanic raises an important issue in his "Bing-ing Around" column whilst Keith Parkinson looks at Bing's celluloid career and continues his A-Z listing of Bing's movies. Bert Bishop reports on Bing's appearances on TV and radio all over the world with Ken Crossland coming in to look at the new CD and DVD releases. Mark Scrimger is working on an article for our spring issue so don't be worried about not seeing his name this time around.

Our cover picture this time comes from Ron Bosley's incredible photo files and the back cover has been specially prepared for us by Joe Sinnott to whom we send our grateful thanks.

As will be seen on the page opposite we have a number of honorary members and we welcome to their ranks, Mrs. Gia Prima, the widow of Louis Prima. Further details of Gia's support will be found on a following page.

Finally, may I extend season's greetings to all Crosby fans everywhere. Happy Christmas!

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

BINGANG the journal of Club Crosby since 1936 has been published for the final time and I would like to congratulate Wayne, Mark and their contributing support writers for a splendid and reflective final issue. Warm and deserving tributes are paid to the club officers whose dedicated work brought so much reading pleasure and interest to members for nigh on 67 years. Happily, Club Crosby continues and we are delighted that 120 members of the club, who previously did not receive BING magazine, will do so with this issue. It is our fervent hope that all 120 will be inspired to continue their membership in the expanded club and we will be pleased, as Wayne has already indicated, if members contact us with their views on how the club should develop in the years to come. Malcolm and Wayne will be aiming to balance the content of the journal, to reflect the best writing from all contributors.

The International Club Crosby is now in being and it is timely to congratulate Wayne, Mark, Wig and Malcolm for their hard work in ensuring a smooth transition to the new club.

Hofstra, Gonzaga, Milwaukee and the publication of new books on Bing's career have raised Bing's profile once more and it is heartening that members of Club Crosby and the ICC were the inspiration behind these wonderful events. In the years to come we will aim to continue with the best traditions of the two clubs.

NEW MEMBERS

In addition to the potential new members above I would like to welcome the following to membership of The International Club Crosby.

AUSTRIA

Guenter Grossmann (Vienna)

AUSTRALIA

John Farrelly (Murrurundi, NSW), Arthur O'Connor (Jacana, Victoria), Keith Courtney (Vaucluse), David Wheeler (Kingsgrove, NSW)

ENGLAND

Mr S Holroyd (Preston, Lancashire), Mr & Mrs D W Gill (Eaglescliffe, Stockton on Tees), Frank Startup (Cirencester, Gloucs.), Lew Graygoose (Plymouth, Devon), Mrs Joan Brown (Snettisham, Norfolk), Tony Hale (Telford, Shropshire) Bill Glover (Ilford, Essex), Mr W A Skinner (East Acton, London).

CHANNEL ISLANDS

David Moody (St. Saviour)

DONATIONS

We are grateful to the following UK & Irish members who have given generously in addition to their annual fee.

Ronnie West, Lew Graygoose, Yvonne Bowles, Edgar Lawson, Alf Plummer, Doreen Hubbard, Raymond O'Toole, Arnold Pope and Michael Winspear.

DEATHS

Sadly I must draw members' attention to the passing of the following. **Joyce Edwards** was the wife of member Roy Edwards and she was a joyous person who warmly supported Roy on his visits to Leeds. **Arthur Smith** died in August and Mrs May Smith told us of Arthur's great love of Bing and that he wished his collection of Crosbyana to be gifted to a well deserving member. See *Trading Post* for further details. **Mrs H E Challon** also passed away in August and we were informed of her loss by her brother, Mr. W A Skinner, who will now become a member as he too is a very keen Bing enthusiast.

We extend our sincere condolences to the friends and family of Joyce, Arthur and Mrs Challon.

LEEDS 2003

The 38th Leeds tribute and the first under the banner of the International Club Crosby has come and gone and once again we enjoyed a wonderful warm Autumn day at the Mansion Hotel. Highlights were the showing of the KSPS-TV documentary, *Bing Crosby - Going My Way*, the screening of the 1981 Gonzaga tribute and Arnold Pope's ever-popular quiz. By unanimous consent, guests asked for the meeting to continue and so we will meet on the first Sunday in October in future years. Michael Winspear has more detail elsewhere in the journal.

CALENDAR 2004

The new calendar is published in the name of The International Club Crosby and contains excellent photographs, which feature Bing in some rare moments of his career. Congratulations to Ron Bosley for choosing these interesting shots. It is vital to our continuing good finances that the sales of the calendar reach 350-400 and to date we are nearing a potential sale of 325 copies. I would like all members to support the calendar and I would urge you, if you have not already done so, to buy a copy from Wig Wiggins, Gun Damo, Bob Neate, David Currington or myself.

TV BOOK

This lavish, beautifully produced book is now available to members and at the time of writing we have still have some copies of the book remaining for sale. We aim to break even with costs, covering only our production, postage and packing outlay. Members who have not already bought a copy should do so now. The book is one to treasure.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2004

Your annual fee is now due and you should remit to your local representative as detailed on the inside page of the journal. As always, I urge all to be prompt with their payment as this saves endless hours of extra work for your secretary and representatives.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION PROMPTLY.

2004 is going to be a challenging but interesting year for your club officers and we trust that members will share our enthusiasm for developing the new international club. New contributors will be welcome and we look forward to the views of those members who will join us for the first time in Spring 2004. Until then, may I extend seasonal greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton

THE CROSBY YEARS

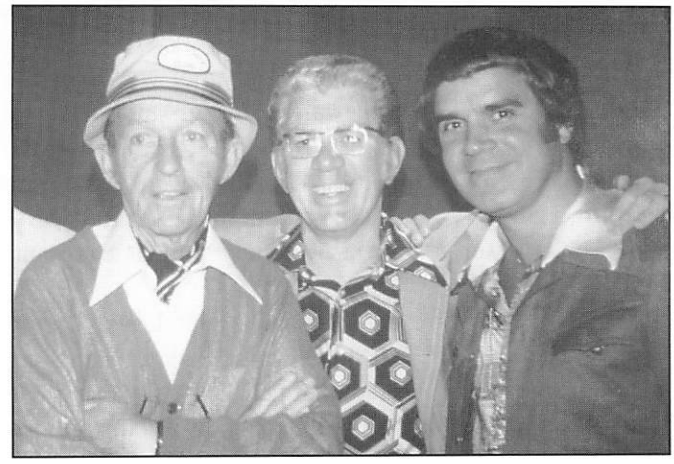
Gord Atkinson gives details of the latest CDs from his wonderful series

When our authorized radio documentary for Bing's 50th anniversary in show business was released in 1975, it was broadcast around the world. A year later at the National Radio Broadcasters Awards in San Francisco it was acclaimed as "the outstanding musical documentary of the year". Bing, who received a lifetime achievement award that evening, added his congratulations by saying: "I want to thank Gordie for the 50 years of Bing Crosby. He is an expert and he knows all the songs that I sang and I want to thank him sincerely."

Following Bing's passing in 1977, the series was re-broadcast to an even wider international audience including listeners to the Global Network of the American Armed Forces Radio.

During this centennial year of Bing's birth, the original 12-part series, which has been updated and expanded on digital CDs, is being augmented with a Prologue and Epilogue. Both of these CDs run over 70 minutes and contain new features and recordings, including the presentation of the 1976 radio awards banquet with after dinner speakers, Rich Little, Ken Carpenter and Bing. In a moving and very funny 'thank you' to the assembled broadcasters, Bing was never more charming or amusing. Highlights from the 1981 broadcast of the unveiling of the Crosby statue at Gonzaga are also featured.

Celebrities on our brand new Prologue and Epilogue include: Kathryn Crosby, Phil Harris, Bob Hope, Victor Borge, Johnny Mercer, Frank Capra, Ken Carpenter, Rich Little and our special guest, Rosemary Clooney.



Bing with Gord and Rich Little in 1976.

Here are a few comments from ICC members about The Crosby Years CDs: "...I would heartily recommend them to anyone interested in the complete Crosby saga"; "...extremely professional celebration of Bing's work"; "...a wonderful insight into Bing the man and the incomparable performer"; "...imaginative

juxtapositioning of records and great interviews"; "...it is wonderful, really the definitive series".

I am very pleased that Kathryn Crosby has a complete set, which she described in a recent note as "a lovely and splendid tribute to Bing."

Both the Prologue and the Epilogue will be released early in the New Year to conclude the 14-part musical anthology of Bing's life and career, "The Crosby Years". All previous CDs are still available, Parts 1 to 10 and the seasonal 2-part "Crosby Christmas".

My sincere thanks for your kind and thoughtful comments and a warm welcome to our many friends and collectors from The Club Crosby. My very special thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane for his ongoing support.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs from "The Crosby Years", Anderson Publishing, 102 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2H 6J2, Canada. [Phone (613) 721-0811]. Payment can be made by check, Visa or MasterCard. The secure e-mail address for orders is admin@anderpub.com . The cost is now $24.00 US for 2 CDs and $13.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN $16.00 for one CD. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks to Anderson Publishing.

Sales in the USA & Canada have, surprisingly, been lower than those in the UK and I fear that members may be confusing the series with similar programmes put out by John Salisbury through station KXL of Portland. Please note that they were completely different productions.

A separate insert is enclosed for use by UK members.)

Bing and Louis Prima

In the last issue of *BING* magazine, we carried a photo of Bing in *Rhythm On The Range* and we drew attention to trumpeter Louis Prima in the same shot. By coincidence, Ron Cannatella had just been in contact with Mr. Prima's widow, Gia, and arising from this Mrs. Prima has written a short article for us about Bing and Louis's friendship.

First of all, some background about Louis Prima. Born on December 7, 1910 in New Orleans, Louis Prima was a trumpeter, band leader, singer and composer. The son of Italian immigrant parents, he was educated at Jesuit High School, and studied the violin for several years, before switching to the trumpet. At the tender age of 17, Louis was inspired by such jazz greats as Louis Armstrong and King Oliver. He acquired his first job as a singer/trumpeter in a New Orleans theatre. In the early 30s, Prima worked with Red Nichols, before forming his own seven-piece group called 'New Orleans Gang', with its signature tune, 'Way Down Yonder In New Orleans'. He was given the opportunity to debut at the then inconspicuous "Famous Door" where he and his band became a smash hit in the small-but-jumping club. He had hits with "The Lady In Red" (1935) and "In A Little Gypsy Tea Room" (1935) around this time. Bing presumably met Louis in New York and it is said that he arranged for him to have a part in *Rhythm On The Range* (1936). Bing also had Louis and his "Jam Band" as a guests on his Kraft Music Hall on April 30, 1936 and December 29, 1938. Louis took part in the huge benefit for pianist Joe Sullivan arranged by Bing on May 23, 1937 and clearly they were quite close at the time. Louis was a keen golfer so it's possible that the two men played together at times. In 1937, Louis wrote the song "Sing, Sing, Sing" which became a huge hit for Benny Goodman and we have more about this later. Prima continued to have relatively small, but telling roles in a number of other movies, notably *Rose Of Washington Square* (1939) and he enjoyed hits with "Bell-Bottom Trousers" (1945) and "Civilisation" (1947). In 1948, Prima began working with 16-year-old singer Keely Smith who became his fourth wife in 1953 and they had two daughters. During the next decade they were recognized as one of the hottest nightclub acts in the USA. Prima's inspired clowning and zany vocals delivered in a fractured Italian dialect, coupled with Smith's cool image and classy singing, were augmented by tenor saxophonist Sam Butera and his group, the Witnesses. In 1958 Prima was briefly in the UK Top 30 with 'Buona Sera', and two years later made the US singles and albums charts with the instrumental 'Wonderland By Night'. In 1961, while still at the height of their fame, the couple were divorced and Louis married another singer, Gia Maione, and continued to work in Vegas through 1967.

Louis Prima and Gia.

Most memorable to many of us was Prima's contribution in 1967 to *The Jungle Book*, the Walt Disney Studio's first cartoon feature in four years, which went on to gross about $26 million. Louis provided the voice of the orang-utan King Louie, and sang one of the

film's hit songs, 'I Wanna Be Like You'. In October 1975, Louis underwent surgery for the removal of a brain tumour but he never fully regained consciousness from the operation. Disabled and incapable of communicating, he remained in a coma until his death on August 24, 1978 in a New Orleans nursing home.

Gia Maione Prima has very kindly made available some of Bing's letters to Louis and she has also written her own thoughts on their friendship.

The wonderful relationship between Bing and Louis began in the 1930s and lasted until Bing's death in 1977. As a matter of fact, Louis' composition, the great jazz classic "Sing Sing Sing" was originally written for Bing! Louis titled it "Sing Bing Sing". One day in 1934, Louis and Bing were at the race track and Bing was enthusiastically cheering for his horse to win and Louis was cheering him on by saying "Sing Bing sing." Louis then wrote the song from this chant and in 1936 changed the title to "Sing Sing Sing", to be more commercially viable.

In those early years, Louis appeared with Bing, in the motion picture 'Rhythm on the Range', just re-issued on DVD. Though they did no further projects together, their friendship endured and their lives touched many times.

My last memory took place at Cedars Sinai Hospital in Hollywood, 1975, during the Christmas holidays. Louis was in a semi-comatose state following a surgery in October of the same year. Louis was in his hospital bed and I turned his TV on. Lo and behold, Bing's Christmas Special was on. Louis began, intensely, staring at the screen. I kept telling him, "Yes, it's Bing, yes it's Bing"! As I watched Louis, his lips were moving, as if he were singing along with his dear friend, Bing. "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" ..... The tears poured down my cheeks.

What a wonderful tribute to friendship and love.

Gia Prima

Amongst the letters passed on to us by Gia are the following. The first is dated September 23, 1946 and is addressed to Pat Shea who ran the Louis Prima fan club.

Dear Miss Shea
Will be pleased to accept honorary membership in your club for Louis Prima.
With best wishes to all the "Louis Prima Donnas", I am
Sincerely,
Bing Crosby

The next letter is dated January 11, 1967.

Dear Louis and Gia,
Kathryn and I are grateful to you for thinking of us at Christmastime.
We appreciate very much the handsome little wooden bucket containing the goodies.
Haven't seen you in too long, Louis, but I certainly keep abreast of your progress and aware of your many successes.
Your old record of "Black Magic" still is among the "First Five" in my top records. What a performance! What an arrangement!
Hope to see you some day soon -
Always yours,
Bing

Next we move forward to January 7, 1969 when Bing wrote:

Dear Louis and Gia
We certainly do appreciate the delicious fruitcake you sent us at Christmastime.
I note it comes from New Orleans, so I'm sure it has a little added zing to it. We all thank you very much.
I hope 1969 is a large year for you.
Believe me to be -
Always your friend
Bing

Gia Prima has promised to pass on other Bing related letters as she comes across them in her archives. We are delighted to welcome her as an honorary member and we thank her for making these letters available to us.

The First Fifty Giants of Broadcasting

The Library of American Broadcasting threw a prestige luncheon on September 18, in the Empire Ballroom of the Grand Hyatt New York honoring "The First Fifty Giants of Broadcasting." Honorees included Fred Allen, Lucille Ball, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Milton Berle, George Burns & Gracie Allen, Walter Cronkite, Freeman Gosden & Charles Correll, Bob Hope, Edward R. Murrow, William S. Paley, Ed Sullivan and of course Bing. The 50 'giants' will also be featured in an exhibition at the library itself, which has a 25,000-square-foot space at the University of Maryland in College Park.

"The hardest part of this event was determining who should be on the list," says Lucille Luonogo, president and CEO of the Library of American Broadcasting Foundation, which owns the library collection and raises money to maintain and expand it.

"We looked for people who had tremendous impact on the industry - not even necessarily the first to do certain things, but the ones who had the greatest initial impact."

In future years, she says, the foundation expects to honor important people from later years, as radio and

television were developing.

The library began with papers gathered by the National Association of Broadcasters. In the early '90s, the NAB decided to turn it over to library professionals.

"People sometimes confuse us with the Museum of Television and Radio," says Lucille Luongo (President and CEO). "We're really more of a companion piece. The museum focuses on programming. We can provide the context of that programming - the industry, the times. We have all the Westinghouse papers. We have the Broadcasting & Cable collection of 250,000 photos."

The library works actively to expand its collection, she says, and its plans include making material available online.

"Broadcasting is a field where so much of the history comes and goes," she says. "It gets lost. We try to preserve it."

Museum seeks Bing shows

And talking of the Museum of Television and Radio, Martin McQuade has been working with the curator of the Museum in New York with a view to a Bing tribute there. The Museum is urgently seeking some of Bing's TV shows (ideally in Quad format) and they need:

1. Bing Crosby show, 1/3/54
2. Bing Crosby show, 10/1/58
3. Salute to Paul Whiteman, 3/24/60
4. DuPont show of the week: making of *The Road to Hong Kong*, 6/62
5. Bing Crosby show, 12/24/62
6. A Little Bit of Irish, 3/14/67
7. Danny Thomas hour: *The Demon Under the Bed*, 10/9/67
8. Feelin' Groovy at Marine World, 2/15/69
9. Goldilocks, 3/31/70
10. Cooling It 4/1/70
11. Christmas with the Crosbys, 12/10/72
12 Kathryn Crosby show, interview with Bing, 10/25/74
13. Parkinson, interview with Bing, 8/30/75
14. Merry Christmas Fred from the Crosbys, 12/3/75
15. Bing a 50th Anniversary gala, 3/20/77

Anyone who can help with videos of the shows listed, please contact Martin McQuade by e-mail at martinmcquade2002@yahoo.com . If you don't have e-mail, please tell Wig Wiggins or your Editor if you can assist.

A Dublin celebration?

It is hoped to arrange an informal type of gathering of Bing's fans around the weekend of the 29th of May in Dublin, Ireland. There really isn't time or budget to do a full-blown Bing-do. Those of us interested in gathering would stay in Dublin for a few days, cover Bing's stomping grounds there, and give informal presentations to each other in a less structured setting. Anyone interested in something of this nature (i.e. attending, topics for a chat, proposed activities, etc.), please let Judy Schmid know, preferably by e-mail at schmid@twcny.rr.com or by mail to 853 Livingston Ave, Syracuse, NY 13210 USA or by phone on 315-472-0573. UK and Ireland members, please advise George O'Reilly at 19 Harbour View, Howth, Dublin 13 (phone: 003531 816 7831) of your interest.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Bing v. Eminem

Here's an intriguing press release.

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 18 — Bing Crosby and Judy Garland will square off against Eminem and Madonna as the American Film Institute sounds out Hollywood on the 100 best songs in U.S. cinema.

THE INSTITUTE, whose previous annual top-100 lists included best American movies and last spring's best heroes and villains, has chosen 400 nominated tunes dating back to Al Jolson's "My Mammy" and "Toot, Toot, Tootsie" from 1927's "The Jazz Singer."

The most recent nominees include Eminem's "Lose Yourself" from last year's "8 Mile" and Catherine Zeta-Jones and Renee Zellweger's version of "All That Jazz" from last year's best-picture Academy Award winner, "Chicago."

The top-100 list will be chosen by ballots sent to about 1,500 actors, directors, writers, critics, film historians and others in Hollywood. The results will be announced on "AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Songs: America's Greatest Music in the Movies" on CBS next June.

Voters can submit up to five write-in choices not included among the 400 nominees. Organizers said this year's topic could provoke more write-ins than previous top-100 lists.

"My prediction is this will be among the most passionate in terms of the response, both in a positive way and in kind of a rancorous way when someone's favorite song isn't on the list," said Bob Gazzale, a producer on the TV special. "People are so passionate about their favorite movies and favorite songs, and bringing the two together is a rather explosive combination."

Crosby has the most nominated songs with 12, including "White Christmas" from "Holiday Inn." Among women, Garland has the most nominations with nine, including "Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz." Contemporary nominees include Madonna's version of "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" from "Evita"; Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor's "Come What May" from "Moulin Rouge"; Sarah McLachlan's "When She Loved Me" from "Toy Story 2"; and Will Smith's title tune to "Men in Black."

We await the results with interest. Let's hope they get the right answers this time! What would your choices be?

WIG'S WORDS

WELCOME TO NEW ICC MEMBERS

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all members of the American Club Crosby who have not previously also been participants in the International Crosby Circle and are, therefore, receiving their first copy of BING magazine.

I am pleased to have been a member of both groups for more than thirty years myself, and I always have enjoyed reading each issue of both BING and BINGANG during this time. As a collector of Bing's recordings for some sixty years (and more recently his films and television programs), I have found both magazines to be very informative and extremely valuable in support of my hobby.

I trust that each of you will find our expanded BING magazine and strengthened Crosby club to be well worth your continued support—in the furtherance of our primary objective of preserving Bing's incomparable musical legacy for the enjoyment of this and future generations.

The memorable celebrations of the centennial of Bing's birth that were held recently at Hofstra University on Long Island and at Gonzaga University in Spokane certainly point the way toward an increasing appreciation of Bing's many talents over the coming years. Those of us who contribute to BING magazine will welcome your own participation in any of our club activities that are of interest to you.

As the representative of the International Club Crosby for the United States and Canada, I welcome your membership and hope to hear from you directly whenever you have questions about the club or your personal Crosby collection. It is very nice to have you as part of our group and my wife, Laura, and I anticipate getting to know each of you better during the coming year.

Please contact us whenever we might be able to help in any way with your interest in the life and career of Bing Crosby. You will find our postal and e-mail addresses, and telephone number, on the inside cover of each issue of BING.

A CENTENNIAL ANTHOLOGY OF BING'S DECCA RECORDINGS

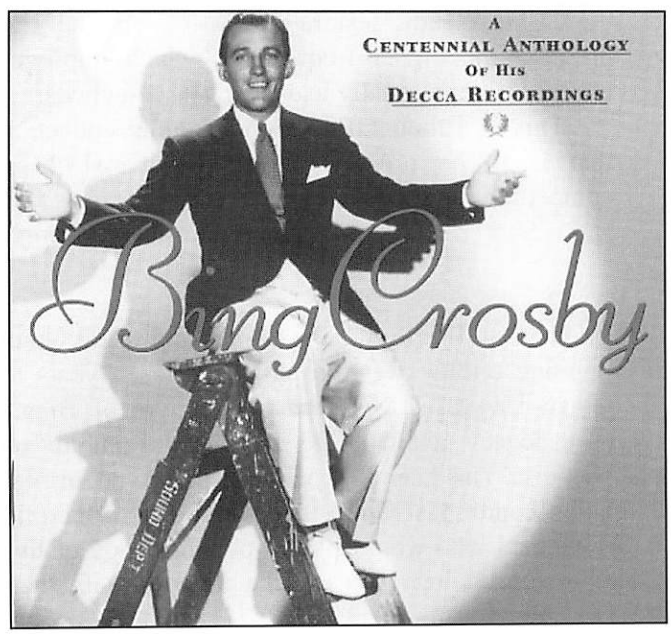
The two previous issues of BING have provided ICC members with details of the 2-CD set of fifty of the best of Bing's Decca recordings that I had the privilege of compiling for Universal Music to honor his 100th birthday this past May. This special CD release has been designed to appeal to the general public and should remain available in music stores, mail order catalogs and via the internet for many years to come. A fellow ICC member has even reported finding it for sale in Finland during this summer!

I also am pleased to report that a number of favorable reviews of Bing's Centennial Anthology have appeared in recent months in various publications and online websites. I would like to reproduce here one which was printed in the widely-circulated music magazine *GOLDMINE* on July 25, 2003, written by New York music critic (and fellow ICC member) **Bill Ruhlmann**. He took particular note of the major purpose behind this special Universal CD reissue, while commenting on it as follows:

BING CROSBY

A Centennial Anthology Of His Decca Recordings MCA/Decca (088 113 222-2) (Two discs)

Bing Crosby always claimed to have been born in 1904, while historians sometimes placed his birth as far back as 1901. But recent biographer Gary Giddins has placed the date definitively as May 3, 1903, which makes 2003 his centenary and suggests that Universal Music, the repository for the bulk of his studio recordings through its MCA subsidiary (known as Decca Records in Crosby's day), should do something to mark the anniversary. *A Centennial Anthology Of His Decca Recordings* is it, a 50-track, two-disc compilation at a CD-busting two-and-a-half-hour length. With the 50-year limit on copyrights for recordings in Europe (not to mention international piracy), Crosby's catalog, like those of other important vintage recording artists, has been subjected to a flood of CD collections of widely varying quality in recent years. Supposedly, these virtual bootlegs are not available in the U.S., where Universal still owns the rights; actually, many are easily and inexpensively available.



MCA has combatted them by putting out a series of excellent collections over the last several years — The four-CD box set *Bing — His Legendary Years 1931-57, Academy Award Winners & Nominees 1934-1960, Bing's Gold Records, The Voice Of Christmas, Top 0' The Morning: His Irish Collection* and *Bing Crosby And The Andrews Sisters: Their Complete Recordings Together.* To assemble them, the label has enlisted the assistance of the venerable British fan club the International Crosby Circle, in particular, its North American representative Wig Wiggins. The results are so good it makes you wonder why other labels don't turn to fan clubs for advice. In the present case, Wiggins — as compiler, researcher and annotator — has taken a survey approach to Crosby's catalog. The singer was encouraged by Decca label head Jack Kapp to diversify, and he excelled at performing everything from Hawaiian songs such as "Sweet Leilani" to proto-country numbers such as "New San Antonio Rose." Wiggins has selected 11 categories — *Early Hits* [re-recordings of Crosby's pre-Decca Brunswick tracks], *Country And Western, Songs Of The Islands, Irish Favorites, Bing's Duets, Swing With Bing, Film Favorites, Bing And The Instrumentalists, Americana, The Voice Of Christmas* and *Around The World.* Each one could serve as the theme for a whole album, and many already have.

But Wiggins puts together mini-sets of three to eight songs each. The listener may not pick up on every category without consulting the notes, but the division serves to organize the material well. Wiggins' choices and sequencing make everything flow together, illustrating his sense of Crosby's mastery of a breadth of material. The original masters sound far better than the muffled, second- or third-generation transfers heard on those imports, even though some deterioration is noticeable here and there. (Engineer Steven Lasker has opted to use the CEDAR audio-restoration process sparingly to preserve the higher frequencies, which improves clarity but occasionally leaves in hiss and clicks.)

This is a thoughtful, good-sounding collection that is to be preferred over the many cheap competitors on the market.

William Ruhlmann

My thanks to Bill Ruhlmann for his kind words about my ongoing efforts over the past half dozen years to encourage Universal Music to make more of Bing's recorded legacy available to the general public on compact disc. This I certainly will continue to do, insofar as market conditions within the music industry permit. ICC members who would like to obtain a copy of this Centennial Anthology CD set can order it from their local music store or via the internet. The catalog number is 088-113-222-2, and the retail price is $29.95.

BING VIGNETTES

From time-to-time, I receive requests about Bing from individuals who are neither Crosby fans as such, nor members of one of the various Crosby clubs. Often these persons are trying to obtain a copy of one of Bing's recorded songs that either evokes a special memory or is required for a special occasion such as a wedding or an anniversary. I always am happy to be of help in such cases, and I have sent many a cassette tape or compact disc across the country as a result.

I would like to share a few of these experiences with you in some of these columns, so that all ICC members are aware of the pleasure that Bing continues to provide, even a quarter century after his passing. Here are a just a few recent examples:

Save The Wedding

A telephone call from a fellow ICC member in Florida alerted me to a pending "disaster" at the planned wedding of his family friend in Louisiana. The bride-to-be's mother was desperately searching for a recording of "I Love To Dance Like They Used To Dance" which just had to be played by the orchestra during the wedding reception. But no one could find a copy of either the sheet music or a recording so that the orchestra could learn how to play the song. I rushed off a cassette copy of Bing's 1975 United Artists recording to Louisiana, and later received a heartfelt note of thanks from the mother informing me that Bing had "saved the wedding at the last minute"!

Happy Birthday

Another telephone call from South Carolina informed me that the gentleman was desperately searching for a copy of Bing's version of "Gypsy Love Song" to give his mother on her upcoming 95th birthday. He said this had been one of his mother's favorite recordings during her youth, and he was anxious to find a copy so that she might enjoy it once again. In this case, I sent along a copy of the JONZO compact disc that contains "Gypsy Love Song" and several more of Bing's Victor Herbert recordings from 1938, as I thought his mother would doubtless enjoy all of them, including some of Bing's other Blue Decca hits from that era. And I certainly was right about that!

A Patriotic Overture

Close neighbors of Laura and myself are the proud owners of several purebred bulldogs, which they have shown officially at various dog shows on the East Coast of the United States. They also are active members of the Bulldog Club of America and recently were asked to coordinate the arrangements for a 3-day spring show held by the club in nearby Maryland. Wishing to open

each day's events with "The Star Spangled Banner", our friends asked if I might have such a recording in my collection that they might use. Of course, I offered them a cassette copy of Bing's 1939 Decca recording. I understand this evoked numerous favorable comments at the show, especially from those who recognized Bing's (unannounced) voice, while remarking that they didn't remember he had ever recorded the national anthem. Well done, Bing, one more time!

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Even though these words are being written in the early Fall, Laura and I would like to extend best wishes to all ICC members and their families for a very Merry Christmas and a most Happy New Year to come. And here's to a great 2004 for the bigger and better International Club Crosby as we move forward together on Bing's behalf.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
October 5, 2003

The World Loses An Institution - Memories of Bob Hope

Steadily, the great show business names who worked with Bing are leaving us and now we have to say goodbye to the man most closely associated with Bing—the one and only Bob Hope. His death came as our last issue was being printed and since then there have been a plethora of tributes and detailed obituaries. Bob and Bing had synergy when they worked together (that is, the product of their working together exceeded the sum of their two separate parts) but even if Bob had never met Bing, he would still have been one of the great entertainment figures of the last century. I am sure that you will agree that Greg Van Beek speaks for us all in his tribute to Bob which follows.

For me, as I'm sure for most of you, the date of Monday, July 28, 2003 will be a date which will always be remembered, though not fondly. It's likely you will never forget where you were when you first heard or read the news that Bob Hope had hit the road to heaven. I first learned of his passing at work about 8:30am, when the radio station we were listening to broke in with a special report that "Mr. USO" had died. A co-worker, knowing what a loyal fan I am, immediately turned to me with an almost sympathetic look, the same look you'd expect to see if you lost a member of your family. It certainly felt like I had. It seemed inconceivable, almost impossible to comprehend that this indefatigable, venerable fountain of youth was no longer with us. Maybe I just didn't want to accept a world without him a part of it. By early afternoon, I simply couldn't concentrate on my job any longer, as thoughts and memories of "rapid Robert" had completely taken over my brain. My boss understood completely, and let me leave early, something I very rarely do.

In talking to many of my Crosby friends, I found I was not alone in my gloom. Yet his death was certainly not unexpected. In fact, by some who knew of Bob's situation, it was almost mercifully hoped for. Since 1996, when I became acquainted with a close friend of the Hope family, I had been getting fairly regular reports of Bob's rapidly deteriorating health in detail. It was most depressing to hear. It made accepting his death somewhat easier, however, knowing he is in a better place. Bob's 90's were not kind to him physically, but no one can say he wasn't a fighter. Indeed, since his bout with gastrointestinal bleeding in June of 2000, he was not seen in public and was bedridden most of the time from then until his death. It was hard on everyone, seeing Bob in this fashion, incapacitated, with failing eyesight and hearing, unable to communicate to old friends. It's a tribute to his spirit and determination, however, that he hung on and made it to reach his 100th birthday. No one knows how he pulled it off. His wife said he wanted to beat George Burns, and he did. Burns lived 45 days past his 100th birthday. Bob lived just shy of two months past his May 29th celebration.

I knew his death was imminent about a week or so before it actually occurred, when I learned the doctors almost lost him not long before. The pneumonia was not responding to treatment. The family wanted this kept quiet (word didn't leak out to the press, surprisingly), but it was advised that they get his affairs in order. As a result, all of his funeral and memorial arrangements were made at that time. Knowing this, I compiled a CD of Bob's best recordings, and sent it to Tom Shanahan, a radio DJ friend of mine. He received it in the mail at almost the very moment word came over the wire that Bob was gone. As a result, he devoted the last half of his radio show that morning to the memory of Bob Hope by

playing the CD. This was only about thirty minutes after the news of his death was announced. His was one of the first of many memorial broadcasts made across the country that day.

About a week after Bob's death, I received a phone call from Mrs. Crosby, informing me that she had to bow out of the planned Irish Fest event in Milwaukee. She shared a few details of Bob's funeral with me, and one is most touching. The casket was closed with a US Flag draped over it. Underneath the casket, there were some small drawers, where the Hope family left photos and other mementoes. Mrs. Crosby took something that was very near and dear to Bing... his own personal rosary...and left it in one of the drawers to be entombed with Bob. After the services, the guests all traveled back to the Hope residence, where, in honor of the many US service men and women Bob entertained for 50 years, they dined on "S.O.S.", as Mrs. Crosby delicately described it. For those who are unsure of what I'm referring to, let me just say that it's something "on a shingle"!

But now that we've covered the ending, let's go back to the beginning, for me anyhow, and I'll share some of my memories of Bob and his family. Memories I'm thankful for. As for me, I've been a devoted Bob Hope fan as far back as I can remember. I never missed his TV specials, and began videotaping them as soon as I got a VCR in 1984 (I have all of them on tape, save for a handful that the local network affiliate didn't carry, from 1984 through his last in 1996). That's the Bob Hope I was first introduced to. The man who'd show up in prime time TV several times a year, usually in September, December, and May. My exposure to his films came later.

One of the shows I saw early on that I can vividly recall is his 1980 Christmas special, during which he sang 'Silver Bells' with actress Loni Anderson on a (studio-created) ski hill. Bob was well buttressed with a wool stocking cap, gloves, boots with skis strapped on, and a heavy winter jacket. I was just eight years old at the time, and seeing Bob Hope all bundled up like this made me feel better about having to suffer through the same fate!

Not long after, I discovered Bing. Aurally at first, through his radio shows, then later visually via *Blue Skies* and *Holiday Inn*. Then of course there were the roads. Those films, especially *Road to Morocco*, firmly cemented my interest in both Bob & Bing. In 1983, on Bob's Christmas TV special, he featured Bing in an archive clip from 1965 performing 'Do You Hear What I Hear?'. I received a Beta VCR as a Christmas present about a week later, and spent Christmas Day videotaping *Holiday Inn* from Noon until 2pm, irritating my parents by disrupting Christmas dinner by constantly leaving the table to check on the film so I could edit out the commercials! I remember too watching, and videotaping, *Road to Bali* for the first time in July 1984, thinking how great it was to see a Road picture in color.

There were several highlights during the late 1980's on Bob's TV specials that stand out in my memory. On his 1987 Christmas special, for example, Bob and guest star Tony Randall recreated the 'Apalachicola FLA' number from *Road to Rio* quite effectively. Well, at least Bob did. With all due respect to Mr. Randall, he's no match for Bing! Bob even had the little "caboose" sign hidden in the back of his suit coat, just like in the film. In 1990, Bing once again appeared on Bob's Christmas special, this time closing the show with an excerpt from the 1966 Hollywood Palace Christmas show showing him performing 'White Christmas' in color. Bob's last Christmas special aired in 1994.

On November 23, 1996, NBC aired Bob's 285th and final NBC-tv special, titled "Laughing With The Presidents" .On November 25th, I received the autographed photo of Bob & Dolores, which accompanies this article. It remains one of my most treasured Bob Hope mementoes. Then, in December 1997, I got quite a shock when I received a phone call from Dolores Hope, who was at Capitol Records in Hollywood working on an album, where a mutual friend told her about me. She asked if I could help suggest some songs for the album she was working on, which I did. I was happy to see she recorded a few of the titles I suggested. All told, Dolores Hope has recorded 6 albums between 1993 and 1999. I had arranged a radio interview with Mrs. Hope in 1999, but at the last minute, the radio station cancelled.

In 1998, I produced and hosted a two and a half hour radio special that aired locally in honor of Bob's 95th birthday. It was very well received, in large part because most of the town was without power the day the show aired, and a battery powered radio was the only link to the outside world most residents had! Even the radio

station was broadcasting on auxiliary power that day!

Also in 1998, I became acquainted with Linda Hope, their daughter and Vice President of Hope Enterprises. I helped her with their video archives by providing copies of some of Bob's guest appearances on various television talk shows and variety shows, and also donated a number of Bob Hope items from my collection for the Library of Congress display they were working on. As a thank you gift, I received a Christmas present from the Hopes that year, a musical Christmas ornament with Bob's likeness. It was beautifully wrapped, with a little card signed "Merry Christmas, Bob & Dolores". In July 1999, the day before my birthday, I received a signed copy of Bob's first book, "They Got Me Covered", from 1941, with a foreword written by Bing. Bob signed it "To Greg, My Best, Bob Hope". The last autograph I received from Bob was in September 1999, when I requested a note from him for Club Crosby's anniversary. It's unique to have a photo in which Bob signs the name Crosby! Bob was forced to stop signing autographs altogether in 2000, after it became too difficult for him to see what he was signing. But even then, he never stopped caring for his fans, an example today's "stars" should take to heart.

Hopefully by these few random recollections and encounters with this great man and his family, you have an idea of just how much a part of my life Bob Hope has been. It truly felt like losing a member of my own family. But having gotten past the initial shock and media saturation following his death, I'm left with a melancholy feeling. Bob Hope truly accomplished it all. He made it past his 100th birthday, and left us with no more fields to conquer. Once he realized he achieved his last goal, he quietly, peacefully slipped away.

The world will never know a legend, an institution, as large and significant as Bob Hope has been. How fortunate we all were to have had him with us as long as we did, at a time when virtually all of his contemporaries are gone. What a happy reunion it must've been when Bob came striding through the pearly gates, waving his golf club, calling out for Bing and Lucy and the rest of his pals. To paraphrase what Bob said in 1974 when he eulogized Jack Benny: "God keep him, enjoy him. We did for 100 years."

Greg Van Beek

The Road From Eltham

That was a very nice, sincere tribute to Bob by Greg and to follow this it's perhaps appropriate for your Editor to take just a brief glance at Bob's life.

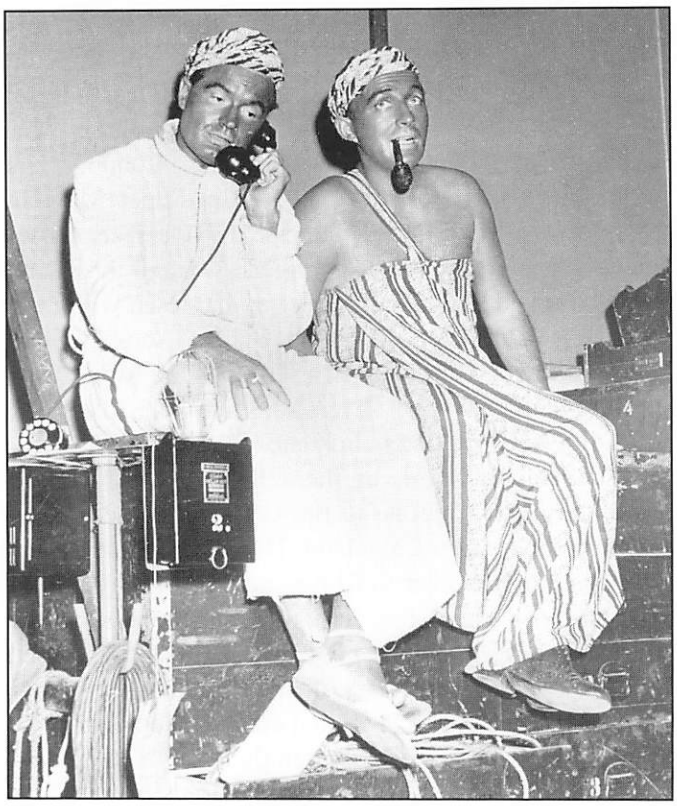
Most of Bob's life story will be familiar to our readers and there is probably no need for us to go into the kind of detail seen elsewhere. As we know, Bob was born in the same month and year as Bing when his family was living at 44 Craighton Road, Eltham, London. His family roots were however in Weston Super Mare in Somerset, England and in fact the 1881 census shows James Hope, a stonemason (aged 37) and his wife, Emily, living at 85 George Street in that town with their four sons and three daughters. James' son, William Henry (known as Harry, born 1870) married Avis Towns in 1891 and they had seven sons and one daughter, including Bob, who was christened Leslie Towns Hope.

The lack of work in the UK led Harry (also a stonemason) to emigrate to the USA where he met up with his brothers in Cleveland. Harry then brought his wife and children over to Cleveland but times remained very hard for them. Bob, in his various books over the years, has described how his mother took in lodgers to help provide funds to enable them to live. We can verify that this was not an exaggerated claim by looking at the 1920 census which shows the family living at 1913 East 105 Street in Cleveland. Apart from Bob's parents plus four of his brothers and a niece, there were six lodgers in the house including people from China and Germany. Bob's mother was clearly a strong willed individual whilst his father was less effective. It's interesting to note how many great entertainers have similar backgrounds and for examples we need look no further than Bing himself, Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley.

Those difficult years in childhood must have given Bob the tremendous hunger and ambition which he never seemed to lose. He went into show business at the age of 17 and it took him twelve challenging years before he could have safely said that he had made it. This long apprenticeship as a dancer, singer, master of

ceremonies and comedian stood him in good stead in the years to come and eventually led to his performing with Bing in 1932 at the Capitol Theatre in New York. Hope had made his Broadway debut in "Ballyhoo" earlier that year and he remained on the Broadway stage in hits such as "Roberta" (1933), "Say When" (1934), "The Ziegfeld Follies" (1935) and "Red, Hot and Blue" (1936).

He segued inevitably into the young medium of radio making his debut on NBC on June 8, 1933 on the Rudy Vallee programme. Bob also made a fruitless foray into the film world with some unsuccessful shorts. Eventually in late 1937 he was tempted to make what was then the long journey to Hollywood and he made his full length film debut in *The Big Broadcast of 1938* in which he first performed "Thanks for the Memory" which was to remain his signature tune for six decades. Very soon he was the star of his own radio show and film followed film including the 'Road' movies with Bing and Dottie. The *Road* pictures were the highest-grossing series in movie history until James Bond came along.



Bing and Bob on the Singapore set.

Over the 18 years from 1938, Hope performed in over 1,100 radio programs at NBC studios and from military bases around the country. He gave his first radio show for servicemen in 1941 at March Field in California. During WWII, he performed his regular Pepsodent radio show at Army, Navy and Marine bases and of the 144 Pepsodent shows broadcast, only 9 came from the NBC studios. By the end of the Korean conflict, Hope had travelled more than a million miles, entertaining more than 10 million troops and eventually appearing at almost every major military base in the world.

He was a wildly popular star for the first 30 years of television and his comedy specials became a ratings phenomenon. For his NBC-TV special in 1950 (the first year ratings were available), Hope reached an amazing 73% of the TV audience. Over the years, the periodic specials set further records. Audience shares of 40% to 70% were almost commonplace for them throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

In 1948, Bob began what was to become a Christmas custom. At the request of Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington, he went to Berlin to entertain U.S. troops involved in the Berlin airlift. The following year, Hope and a troupe of Hollywood performers entertained G.I's in Alaska. In successive years, he led troupes to the Pacific, England, Iceland, Alaska, Europe, Africa and the Far East. In 1969, it became the "Around the World Christmas Tour" — with a new "first" added: a preview of the show at the White House for President and Mrs. Nixon. He also ventured to Vietnam to put on shows during the Vietnam war of the late 1960s and early '70s.

His movie career outside the *Road* films was prolific and included: "Louisiana Purchase" (1942), "My Favorite Blonde" (1942), "The Princess and the Pirate" (1944), "Monsieur Beaucaire" (1946), "The Paleface" (1948), "The Great Lover" (1949), "Fancy Pants" (1950), "The Lemon Drop Kid" (1951), "My Favorite Spy" (1951), "Son of Paleface" (1952), "The Seven Little Foys" (1955), "Beau James" (1957), "Alias Jesse James" (1959), "The Facts of Life" (1960) and "Critic's Choice" (1963). His films were tremendously popular in the 1940s and 1950s and Bob was the top box office star in the USA in 1949, displacing Bing who had reigned supreme for five successive years. A survey carried out by tlavideo.com in 1999 placed Hope in twelfth place in a list of the top stars of all-time based on estimated ticket sales at cinemas. He was ahead of Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra, Bette Davis, Burt Lancaster and Charlton Heston to name but a few.

It has to be admitted that his films rather fell away in the 1960s with such lighthearted amusements as "Call Me Bwana" (1963), "A Global Affair" (1964), "I'll Take Sweden" (1965), "Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number?" (1966), "Eight on the Lam" (1967), "How to Commit Marriage" (1969) and "Cancel My Reservation" (1972). In fact, "Boy, Did I Get a Wrong Number?" was unkindly included in the book "The Fifty Worst Movies of All Time".

Bob also hit problems around this time with his views on the Vietnam war but his TV specials continued to draw good ratings despite this. One of the most popular entertainers in history, he reached an audience that was international and multigenerational. A master of nearly every popular medium of his times — vaudeville, stage, radio, movies, TV — he was awarded an honorary knighthood by the Queen in 1998. "What an honor and what a surprise for a boy born in England, raised in

Cleveland and schooled in vaudeville," he commented.

He was entertainment's most decorated and honored man, according to the Guinness book, with more than 1,500 awards. Among them were the Peoples Choice Award — Male Entertainer of the Year — which he won five times. Also the National Medal of Arts from President Bill Clinton (1995), the Medal of Liberty from President Reagan (1986), the Jean Hersholt Award from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences (1959) and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Screen Actors Guild (1965.) Not to mention the Guinness book world record as the entertainer with the longest running contract — 61 years with NBC. From 1940 to 1978 he emceed seventeen Academy Award shows: nine by himself, eight others as co-host. Without the need of citations, the world also knew him for his nonstop, selfless charity work, particularly the generations of American servicemen he entertained at home and abroad.

He held 54 honorary degrees and ICC member Professor Roger Osterholm was instrumental in the conferring of two of these. Roger originally approached Bing about an honorary degree and when Bing demurred saying that it was inappropriate, he passed Roger on to Bob Hope supplying his address and contact details. Bob was of course delighted to accept and came to Roger's university and put on a great show.

It is perhaps that story that helps to point up the disparities between Hope and Crosby as does an interesting memo in the BBC Archives which highlights Bob's financial hunger. The memo is dated October 9, 1961 and is regarding the payment of fees to Bing and Bob for some proposed shows. Bing had been asked about fees and said "You're not sponsored are you?" and on being assured that the BBC were not, he said, "Well, give me a shilling." The BBC producer replied that the BBC did not like taking anything for nothing and Bing responded "Well pay something to charity." At a later date the Head of the BBC's Light Entertainment section was in conversation with Bob Hope about a show and Hope queried the fee. The BBC man felt rather on the spot and shot out a quick "£250" (then worth about $700). The disparity between the two fees became apparent to another BBC official who then telephoned Hope and put his cards on the table. Hope said that this shouldn't cause any difficulty because after all "you see that fellow Crosby is not as well known as I am." With Bing and Bob sharing the same house at the time, it was eventually decided to pay Bing £250 as well!

Don Small with Bob Hope at a family gathering

As can be seen, Bing and Bob were completely different personalities. Bob was always looking to perform while Bing only did so when it was absolutely essential. Bob's main passions were show business and golf. Bing had a multitude of interests which Bob did not share and as Bing got older his entertainment career was certainly not the most important to him. Bob was the extrovert to top all extroverts. Bing, in reality, was mainly an introvert. One of the most successful teams ever, at their peak they only had to mention the other's name to get a huge laugh. On film, radio, TV and the golf course they were box office magic and will always be remembered as such. Their films and their radio confrontations from the 1940s still sparkle today and the ad-lib humour from their radio work remains hilarious.

How friendly were they? I suspect that they were very close show business friends for most of the 1940s but they seemed to drift apart somewhat as the decade concluded. It is said that they really renewed their friendship when they rented a house together in England in 1961 while making *The Road to Hong Kong*. The

and jazz with virtuoso scat solos, hymns, Christmas music - practically every genre written in his time." I received a "thank you" letter but my commentary was not printed.

We all know how Bing is boycotted from nostalgia radio shows. Here's what galls me. A nationally-syndicated program that alleges to play the "hits" of the 40s, 50s, and 60s will spin "Moonlight Becomes You," not by Bing but by Johnny Mathis. It was one of Bing's biggest hits.

Here's a little more evidence. The A&E cable channel runs a Biography series. Ingrid Bergman was featured not long ago. She was Bing's co-star in *The Bells of St. Mary's*. Depicting her movie career, she was shown with Spencer Tracy, Cary Grant, and even Charles Boyer. All three of them were shown and heard speaking. Then Ingrid is shown in her nun's habit facing the camera and speaking - to Bing, no doubt, but he's not seen or heard. In a later scene Bing and Ingrid are on stage receiving an award (Photoplay, I think). Bing , looking very dapper, is speaking, but he is mute. His lips are moving, but there is no sound!

Mary Martin was also profiled. Bing is mentioned once. There are no scenes from those two great musicals, *Birth of the Blues* or *Rhythm on the River*. These were her entry into national big time. Why not just a bit of the classic "Wait 'Till the Sun Shines Nellie"?

I can forgive almost all of the foregoing, but the next two examples are egregious in their apparent dismissal of Bing Crosby. That he was the most popular entertainer in the world in the 1930s and 1940s is documented.

Yet *Billboard* magazine, "The International Newsweekly of Music, Video and Home Entertainment" chose to ignore Bing in its 100th Anniversary issue. THERE IS NOT ONE PHOTO OF BING in the entire 274-page "Special Collectors Edition." There are three or four of Sinatra; Al Jolson is pictured. So are Buffalo Bill and many black performers in a "Rhythm and Blues" feature. There is not one paragraph dedicated to Bing or his contribution to pop music. He's mentioned several times but only in the context of another subject.

In an article titled "Charts - Billboard's Greatest Hits," a writer states: "The charts that appear in this issue are an accurate accounting of the titles that had the most outstanding chart performance, for that was what was measured - not sales, not historical value." HUH??? Interpreter, please! If sales and number of times played doesn't determine chartings, I guess I'm too dumb to understand Billboard's formula as it exists today.

It is very unprofessional for a journal of record to ignore its own files when doing a 100th year issue. That's strange, because on Bing's death in 1977, the magazine ran a very complimentary obituary.

Another case of dismissing Bing was U.S. News and World Report in a cover story last year, "American Music, From Yankee Doodle Dandy to Hip Hop." It was a woefully thin issue. Apparently not as much ad space was sold as management had hoped.

Again, not one photo of Bing. He gets one line. He had "a" hit in 1936, "Pennies from Heaven," but Sinatra's photo is above the year 1940 with a commentary that he had "10 hits in a row." Excuse me, but those were Tommy Dorsey hits. Sinatra contributed, but so did the Pied Pipers and Jo Stafford.

What are the reasons for censoring almost any mention of Bing by these outlets? Is permission needed? Is it not being granted? Isn't much of it public record or out of copyright? Certainly a publication such as *Billboard* has a right to its own files.

At the Bing Crosby Centennial at Gonzaga last May, I was the last one to make a comment, posing a question to a panel consisting of Gord Atkinson, Ken Barnes, Buddy Bregman, Will Friedwald, and Gary Giddins.

Kathryn Crosby was an arm's length in front of me. Speaking into a rather loud PA system and citing some of the things noted above, I said "Many of us in the Crosby family of fans think there is some sort of conspiracy to erase Bing from pop music history." Mrs. Crosby jerked her head around and seemed startled by my comment. All of the knowledgeable panelists seemed to be nodding in agreement. Gord Atkinson, the Canadian broadcaster who knew Bing well, closed the meeting saying, "Pete, you make a valid point."

Judy Schmid, who has been very active on the Bing internet bulletin board, suggested we Bingers form a "truth" squad. She suggests we call and write to sources that knock Bing or to encourage media to show and play more of Bing. I second that motion.

There is no doubt Bing is being shunned, but I have a final thought. The entertainment commentators who exist today are the kind who, if they were mature writers, would wander into the Redwood Forest and pick up a rotting twig and OOOH and AHHH over it and ignore the gorgeous, magnificent Redwood.

Bing is the Redwood of entertainment. You can ignore him now, but he'll be here forever.

PETE CAKANIC
509 Pershing Drive
North Augusta, South Carolina 29841, U.S.A.
(803) 278 0645

(Editor: Pete has articulated something that so many of us have felt for a long time. Let's all make sure that we all do as Judy Schmid suggests and keep writing to the media. As already described, Ron Field took on CNN and to give another example, Trevor Wagstaff in the UK was annoyed when he saw that the prestigious 'Gramophone' magazine had not mentioned Bing's centenary. He wrote to them and as a result there was a nice tribute to Bing in the magazine's November issue. Well done, Trevor! We should all do something like that.

I have heard recently about a CD release of rare Bing material being blocked for the time being and I am bewildered by this not only as a Crosby fan but as a

commercial observer. This is not the time to place obstacles in the way of Bing projects. Producers will simply move on to more current artists such as Dean Martin with the result that Bing becomes more forgotten and the flow of royalties to his family declines. I made these points to Kathryn Crosby in November 1999 and at that time she said that we should write to her if we become aware of projects being delayed by legal or permission difficulties. Pick up your pens, folks!)

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Carol Anderson, 24 Black Rd., Hebburn NE31 1HY, UK (Phone: 0191 424 9607)

Carol is the widow of our late member Bob Jones who many will remember for his 'Moments To Remember' LPs. Sadly her second husband has died and she has decided to dispose of a tie belonging to Bing which was sent to Bob by Kathryn Crosby. The covering letter from Kathryn will also be made available. Please contact Carol direct with your offers.

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur has produced a new Bing stamp which is smaller than its predecessors and this is reproduced below in its actual size. The price is £3 for 25 and unfortunately Arthur has to restrict this offer to UK members only.

Also Arthur still has some of the coloured A4 sized (approx. 8" by 11.5") collage of the stamps he has produced in recent times and this has been produced as a limited issue of 250. It costs £3 for UK members. Sadly it has proved uneconomical to also offer it to USA and Canadian readers. The collage would look lovely in a frame. See page 16 of the Summer 2002 issue of BING for a photograph of the collage.

Roy Dixon, 280 Spital Rd., Bromborough, Wirral CH62 2AW, UK

WANTED: SPOKANE LPs - £5 each offered plus postage. Need Spokane 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Footlight Records, 113 East 12th St., New York, NY 10003, USA (Tel: (212) 533-1572, Fax: (212) 673-1496, e-mail: footlight1@aol.com)

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. See also www.footlight.com

Robert Larkin, 22 Monalee, Monavalley, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland

WANTED

A good video copy of the film *Sing You Sinners* starring Bing, Fred MacMurray and Donald O'Connor. Very good price offered.

Dave Odell, 5215 110th Street, Apt 69, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 3KI, Canada

WANTED

LP Records: A Time To Be Jolly / Bing Goes Latin / Bing In Demand / Holiday In Europe / I Love You Truly / When Irish Eyes Are Smiling

VHS Videos: Bing & Carol "Together Again For The First Time" / Bing Crosby Show, March 20, 1961 with Carol Lawrence & Maurice Chevalier / Dinah Shore Show, November 12, 1975 with Bing, Pat Boone & Phil Harris / High Tor / Top O' The Morning

Dieter Pressler, P.O.Box 1703, Hoodsport, WA 98548, USA (e-mail:dbpressler@mailbug.com , phone:360.877.6199)

offers this ribbon in Bing's colors. It can be worn or displayed in a variety of configurations and pinned with different tie-tacs. He will mail it anywhere in the world for US$5.50, or US$4.50 each for more than one.

Select Circles, P. O. Box 302, Riverside, CT 06878, USA (Phone: 203-661-8421)

Select Circles have a large stock of Bing CDs. Write or call for information.

Mrs. May Smith, 6 Riverside House, Old Town, Peebles, Peebleshire, EH45 8JD, Scotland (Phone: 01721 722547)

Mrs. Smith's husband, Arthur, passed way in August and she writes advising us that it was Arthur's dearest wish that someone within the club should benefit from his Bing tapes and other memorabilia. Would anyone who is interested in these items, please contact Mrs. Smith direct.

Mrs. J. Torey, 594 Wickham Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 8DN, UK (Phone: 020 8777 2520)

Mrs. Torey is looking to dispose of some of her late husband's Bing collection including boxed sets of 78s and 45s plus several books. Telephone for further details.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins, address on inside cover

Wig still has a small supply of his 'must have' discography *Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings - from 78s to CDs*. Get one while you still can! Softbound, $17.50 postpaid in the USA. UK members can obtain the book from Jim Reilly, 27 Beaulieu Road, North End,

Portsmouth, Hants PO2 0DN, UK (phone 02392-666677). Price: UK £10 (inc. p. & p.), Mainland Europe & Ireland £11 (inc. p. & p.).

Peter R. Wilson, 13 Etterby Lea Rd., Stanwix, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 9JW, UK (Phone: 01228 538033)

Peter is a volunteer worker in a second-hand book / record shop and there are many Bing sheet music items available. He would like to see them find a good home. He has provided us with a list of about 60 pieces and he is looking for £1 / £2 for most of these. Please contact him direct with your 'wants'.

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BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail bingsfriends81@earthlink.net - Web Site address - http://home.earthlink.net/~bingsfriends81/)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

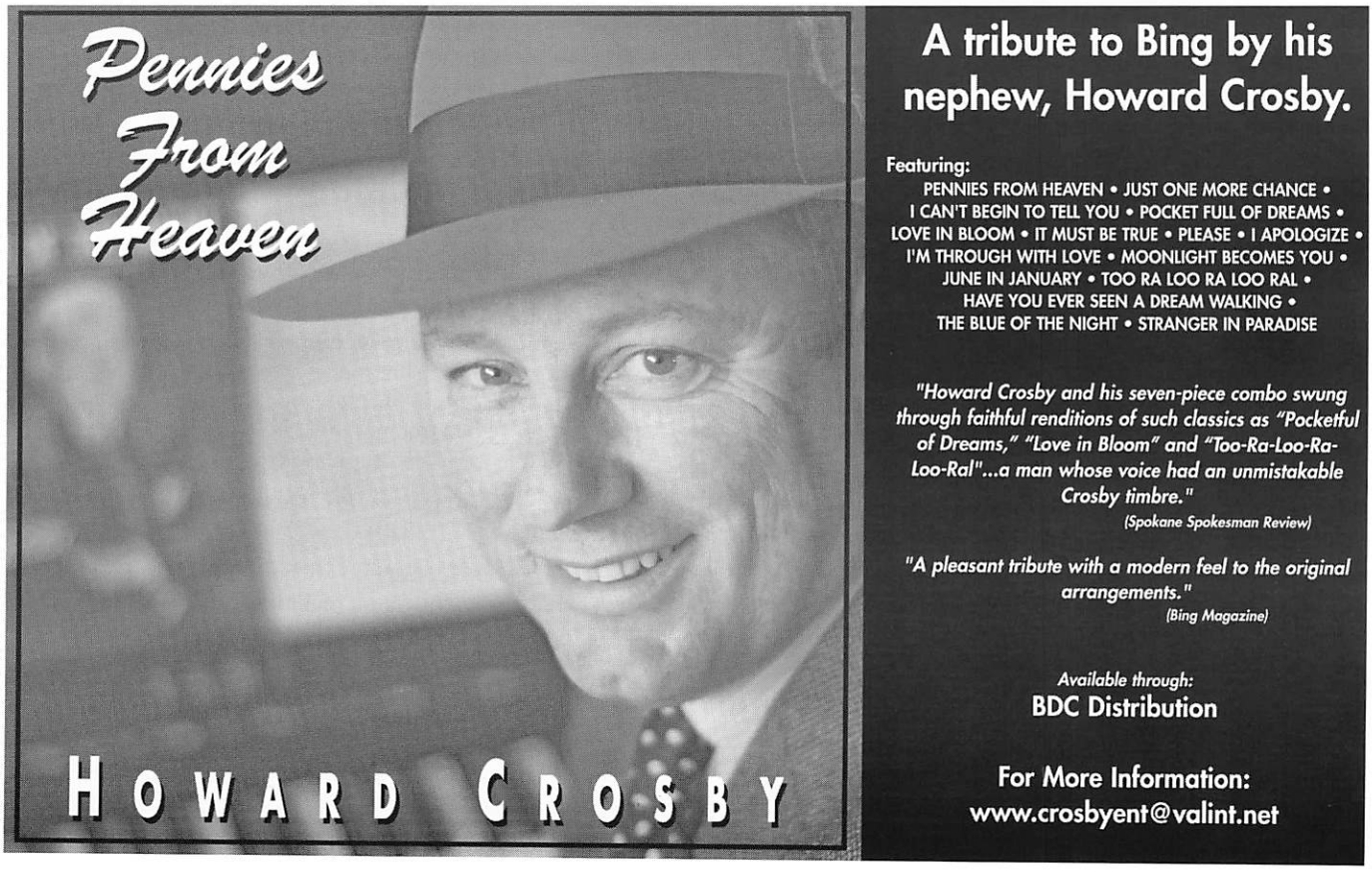
We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818, e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £16.50 for the UK, £18.60 for Europe and £24 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk.
e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive



articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers Letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A *"must"* for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Movie Memories, c/o Chris Roberts, 10 Russet Close, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN15 8YJ, UK (E-Mail: CRobmvm@aol.com)

A priority for the fans of the golden age of the cinema, covering the films and stars of the 1930's to the 50s, both Hollywood and the UK. A thrice yearly magazine, with up-to-date news and well illustrated, which costs £10 for a year for UK readers and £15 for those from overseas.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, c/o Michelle Malik, 14611 Valley Vista Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, USA (email: cantorfan@aol.com
website: http://www.eddiecantor.com/)

Rosemary Clooney, http://www.rosemaryclooney.com/

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Mrs. Jutta Fagan, 13 Mayfair Court, Mayfair Close, The Ave, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5EL, UK.

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

The International Mills Brothers Society, c/o Daniel Clemson, 604 N. Market St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2727, USA (Phone: (717) 697-4271, e-mail: MillsBros1@aol.com, website: www.millsbrotherssociety.org/)

Nelson Riddle Appreciation Society - Alan Wright, 4 Jardine Cottages, Templewood Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BQ, UK (Phone / Fax 01753 663869, website: www.btinternet.com/~mike.leach
e-mail: mike.leach@btinternet.com)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Margaret Cummings, Secretary, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683,
website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Kate Smith Commemorative Society, P. O. Box 3575, Cranston, RI 02910, USA (e-mail: pinky@wzrd.com - website: http://katesmith.org/)

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

First we have a review by Bill Piccone, one of our Philadelphia members.

Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music, Volume 1: 1890 -1930

by Don Rayno.

$49.95 Cloth 0-8108-4579-2 published by Scarecrow Press in June 2003, 840pp

Without doubt, the most famous and influential man on the popular music scene throughout the 1920s was Paul Whiteman. His dozens of hit records, for Victor and Columbia established him as a household name. He gave exposure to dozens of future stars, musicians and singers - on records, at ballrooms, concert halls, in motion pictures and on radio and television. His was the orchestra which premiered George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" and Ferde Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite", to name just two of the many extended compositions performed and recorded by Whiteman and his concert orchestra beginning in the mid-1920s.

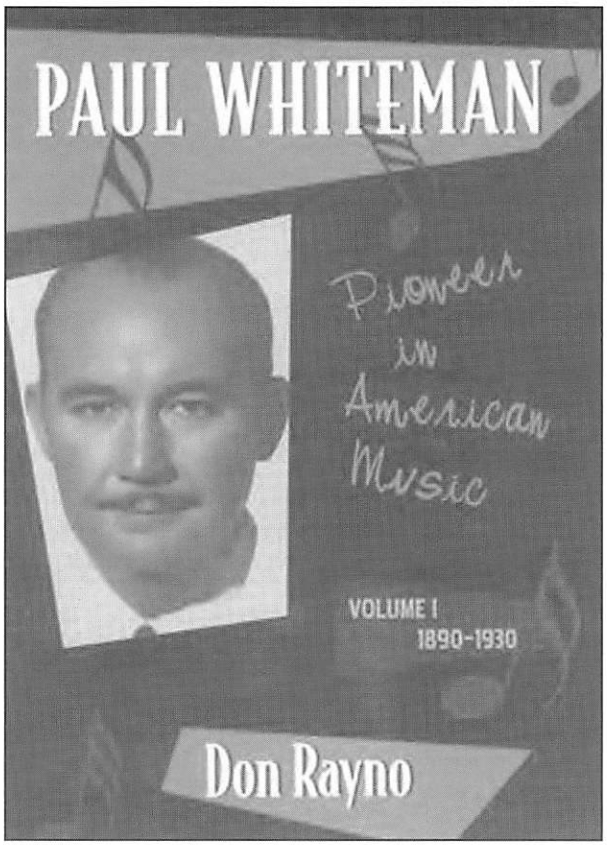
Limited space here prevents doing more than skimming the surface. Yet, since the 1930s it has been fashionable to deride and shun the "King of Jazz". Editor, Norman Gentieu, in his introductory chapter, "Some Comments" sums up the situation.

> "It is an irony of fate that much of the literature of jazz has been written by opinionated dilettantes in music and purblind ideologues. Thanks to such self-appointed arbiters of taste, historical and musical verities have been trashed as irrelevant impediments to their reckless rhetoric and nowhere has this been more dismayingly demonstrated than in the case of Paul Whiteman, who sinned unforgivingly in being proclaimed by the public as the "King of Jazz". As Al Smith so memorably said "No matter how thin you slice it, it's still baloney". That aptly defines the shenanigans of the early Whiteman bashers, whose eager-beaver epigones are still around today and still slicing the same stale baloney."

Matty Malneck, violinist and arranger for the Whiteman orchestra (as well as occasional substitute conductor) has his own comments along these lines, "You couldn't make it with jazz, you had to have a commercial band, only Paul's great power and prestige could put over jazz commercially in those days. He could present it." Malneck also recalls "In those days swing and jazz were not there, not accepted yet. If you got yourself a jazz band, you would starve. That's the story of the music business, jazz was always hard to sell."

Author, Don Rayno, as the cover flap of the book informs us "has studied the life and music of Paul Whiteman for the past two decades. He is Director, Raleigh-Area Concerts of Prayer, a regional ministry in North Carolina that brings together Christian pastors and lay people for united prayer activities." Without doubt, this background qualifies him not only to be an intelligent and insightful biographer of Whiteman, but to utilize sources denied to Whiteman's previous biographer, Thomas A. Delong, who alienated Whiteman's daughter, Cindy Magill, causing her to withhold

countless family pictures that she, on the other hand, eagerly made available to author, Rayno.



Bing Crosby (and fellow Rhythm Boys Al Rinker and Harry Barris) appear prominently in this masterpiece. Don Rayno lovingly describes Bing and Al Rinker's entry into the Whiteman band after seeing them at the Metropolitan Theatre in Los Angeles. Whiteman's manager, Jimmy Gillespie (to Whiteman) "I heard a couple of great boys last night who you ought to have in the band." Whiteman: "Why?" Gillespie: "Well, they sing real cute." Whiteman: "I need them like I need two holes in my head and double pneumonia, I'm a little heavy with singers," the band leader replied. Gillespie: "I think you'll find them kind of interesting."

Don Rayno covers Bing and Al joining Whiteman, the addition of Harry Barris to the duo, thus creating the Rhythm Boys, recordings made by the trio separately and with the orchestra, Whiteman's much-heralded switch from Victor to Columbia Records, the early mish-mash that initially sidetracked "King of Jazz" and its eventual filming spread over 5 months, including Bing's arrest for drunken driving which lost him his chance to sing "Song of the Dawn" in the film. Rayno, "It was a lesson Bing never forgot", and the release of "King of Jazz" and the Rhythm Boys leaving the band on April 30, 1930, concurrent with Whiteman paring down the size of the orchestra and cutting salaries, ending this first volume of two.

A complete discography is included covering 1920 through 1930, including all recordings made under Whiteman's name, plus recordings by reduced units from the Whiteman Orchestra, such as the Virginians and Busses' Buzzards, as well as small units led by Bix Beiderbecke and Frank Trumbauer, plus the Victor and Columbia sides by the Rhythm Boys and Bing's six solo sides for Columbia in 1929. For the discography, author Don Rayno has used information from the Victor and Columbia files (and from the written arrangements held at Williams College) to establish musicians, vocalists etc. According to the discography, Bing does <u>not</u> participate in the following Columbia recordings: C-O-N-S-T-A-N-T-I-N-O-P-L-E, La Paloma (either version), La Golondrina, Let's Do It (W147536), Georgie Porgie, and the two-sided Christmas medley. On the other hand, Rayno lists the vocalists for "Japanese Mammy" (Columbia 1701-D) as Austin Young, Chester Gaylord, Jack Fulton, Bing Crosby and Al Rinker.

One more interesting point Charles Margulis, not Bix Beiderbecke, is the cornet soloist on Whiteman's Columbia recording of George Gershwin's 'Concerto in F' and this is dealt with in great detail in the text and discography.

My good friend and record collector, Norman Gentieu (editor of this book) informs me that author, Don Rayno has already begun work on Volume 2.

PAUL WHITEMAN - PIONEER IN AMERICAN MUSIC may not do for Whiteman what Gary Giddins' masterpiece *BING CROSBY - A POCKETFUL OF DREAMS* has done for Bing, but it is a long-overdue biography of a long-maligned and neglected icon whose influence and generosity gave us so many of the musicians and singers we revere today - most of all Bing.

Bill Piccone

Editor's comments: Bill's review encouraged me to purchase the book and I can only echo his thoughts. The book contains nearly 60 rare, black and white photos and is a wonderful reference source for anyone studying Paul Whiteman and the many artists who worked for him. Very thoroughly researched, it's my kind of book. You can order it from Scarecrow Press at 15200 NBN Way, P. O. Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17219, phone: toll free (800) 462-6420, local (717) 794-3800. If you order over the Internet from www.scarecrowpress.com you get a 15% discount. UK readers can obtain the book for £32.26 (plus £3.22 postage) from Plymbridge Distributors Ltd., Estover Rd., Plymouth PL6 7PY, phone: 01752 202300.

Discographical queries

Bill has highlighted some discrepancies with earlier Crosby discographies which I have discussed with Wig Wiggins and Wayne Martin. The songs listed in which Bing does not participate have always been accepted as doubtful but were included in discographies and the Jonzo series for completeness as some collectors insist that they are bona fide items. However most of us will accept that Bing was not involved in them. Also, having gone through the book line-by-line, I should also like to mention the following in the hope that the other experts reading this will be able to add definitive comment.

1. 'I'm Coming Virginia' - the version recorded April 29, 1927 was always assumed to be by Bing and Al Rinker but as the Victor session logs do not list Al Rinker on this recording - only Bing and Harry Barris - Mr. Rayno is convinced that it is Barris with Bing. Having listened to the two versions which have been issued, I find it very difficult to make a judgement on the other voice with Bing. It could be Harry Barris, and Fred Reynolds in his book suggests this too.

2. 'Ooh! Maybe It's You' - listed in the Bassett / Bishop discography but Mr. Rayno states that Bing was not involved. Most of our experts will now agree with this.

3. 'Japanese Mammy' - As Bill Piccone says, it is felt that Bing was part of the chorus on this song which also had Bix in support. A version was attempted on May 22, 1928 (master number 146318) but all four takes were rejected. Another

version was attempted on June 10 and take 6 was issued and can be found on the CD "The Best of Paul Whiteman - The Columbia Years" issued by Collectors' Choice CCM 03322. Wig does not agree with Mr. Rayno and he comments:

> *. . . My considered opinion of Rayno's claim that Bing was part of the "humming chorus" on this recording is that he is wrong. When Phil Evans and Richard Sudhalter listed this song in their 1974 book on Bix, they reported that the vocal was by Austin Young "and a quintet" (file card) or Austin Young "and a trio" (session ledger), with none of the other vocalists being identifiable. Now, thirty years later, Rayno comes to the conclusion that Bing and Al were in the vocal group, but without any evidence to support this. I have the Whiteman recording of "Japanese Mammy". There is a clearly-identifiable Austin Young solo, followed by a very brief humming chorus which sounds more like the Whiteman "sweet trio" (Young, Gaylord and Fulton) than anything else. There is absolutely no aural evidence that Bing or Al Rinker were part of this group. I believe that this is one that Rayno made up out of whole cloth in an effort to identify the backing vocalists. He definitely does not prove his case. "Japanese Mammy" is not a Crosby recording in my judgment.*
>
> *In conclusion, this is a first-class Paul Whiteman biography which will be of interest to many Crosby collectors. But I do not believe that it breaks important new ground as far as proven Bing recordings are concerned. However, as the wise old sage has said, you can pay your money and take your choice in this world.*

4. 'If You Don't Love Me' - this song was recorded on June 17, 1928 with a master number of 146544. Bing is shown as the vocalist but all four takes were rejected. Whiteman recorded the song again on July 20 of the same year but this time the singer was Irving Kaufman. Presumably we should add this unissued version by Bing to our discographies?

5. 'How About Me?' - Mr. Rayno states that this song was recorded by Bing in New York on December 14, 1928 (master number 147537) but all four takes were rejected. I am fairly sure that Bing was with the Rhythm Boys in Kansas City at the time so I feel that we should disregard this entry. The song was recorded again by Whiteman with Skin Young handling the vocals.

6. 'My Angeline' - the unissued take from February 28, 1929 (master number 147751) was apparently by Jack Fulton not Bing. Bing recorded it on March 7, 1929.

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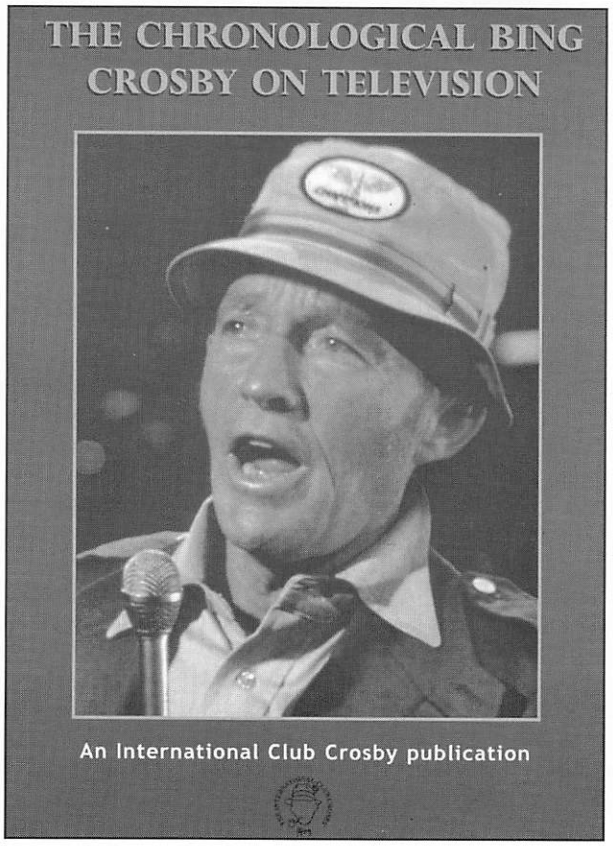
I would welcome readers' comments on these discographical matters.

The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television

Secondly, we must mention this new book which has been compiled by Lionel Pairpoint, Greg Van Beek and your Editor with much help from Martin McQuade. Running to almost 200 pages with about 80 photographs, some of which have never been published before, the book is an in-depth look at Bing's TV career. We have details of every major show in which Bing participated and full details of songs and other artists are given together with contemporary press comment where available. The page size is the same as Lionel's radio book and Wig's discography. Paper quality is the same as the magazine and there is a laminated coloured glossy cover. In short it is a very prestigious book which is the first publication of the new International Club Crosby.



This is a limited edition of only 200 copies and the cost is £24.99 (including post and packing) in the UK, £26.99 in Ireland and Europe, $50 in the USA and Au$65.99 in Australia and New Zealand. We have pre-sold the vast majority of the books but there are still some left. If you want one, order it quickly from Michael Crampton or from your local representative.

Uncle Bing - Part 2

Howard Crosby, the son of Ted Crosby, gives us some more heartwarming memories of his Uncle.

Greetings to all the club members from Walla Walla, Washington, USA! I think when I left off with my rambling narrative last winter, for the Spring issue of BING, I made it up to New Year's, 1974. In the first article, I covered all of my personal recollections of Uncle Bing from the time I was a small boy until my Dad's passing in December of 1973. However, from that point until Bing's death in October of 1977, I would have more personal interaction with him than I had in the previous 22 years. More about that in a minute.

I realize that I had promised Malcolm that I would have this article ready for the summer issue, but that was before I considered how much I would end up getting involved with the wonderful people at Gonzaga University in the planning and execution of the 100th Anniversary Tribute to Bing this past May. I know that there have already been many articles here about the event, but I want to add that it was a truly special time for all of the Crosby family members who were there, and fortunately, unlike Hofstra, there were quite a few of us! By my count, at the Gonzaga event there were three grandchildren, two nephews, three nieces, four grandnephews and five grandnieces of Uncle Bing, and of course his wife Kathryn was there. It was a very special time for all of us.

Back to the story. Just a few weeks after Dad died, I got word that Uncle Bing had been hospitalized in the Bay Area for lung surgery. His doctors had discovered a very large growth on his left lung, and everyone feared lung cancer. The surgeons removed a large, benign growth nearly the size of an orange, and with it about 2/3rds of his left lung. It was diagnosed as some sort of rare fungal growth usually only found in Africa, but they were optimistic that he would make a full recovery. No one was quite sure if he would still be able to sing after this kind of ordeal. Of course, I sent him get well cards and wrote a couple of letters, but I got a personal report from Auntie Kay who drove up from Watsonville to see him. She said that the surgery had hit him pretty hard, but his spirits were good and he was his usual ebullient self.

A couple of months into his convalescence, I got a phone call from Uncle Bing, wanting to know how Ed (my brother) and I were getting along.....of course, he knew how close to Dad I had been. He said he was getting along much better, practicing some chipping and putting, but no full shots yet, and then asked me if I'd like to come down and play in the Crosby that next January. Would I ever! Before I could tell him there was no way for a college senior to afford it, he told me he would pay for everything, entry fee, travel, hotel, the works. Then I reminded him I could probably stay with Aunt Mary Rose in Carmel, and he agreed that would certainly beat any hotel. I think I hung up from that call as excited as I've ever been in my life. Just imagine the thrill for a 2-handicap college player to tee it up alongside Palmer and Nicklaus in the Crosby! The formal invitation would arrive in the mail a few weeks later.

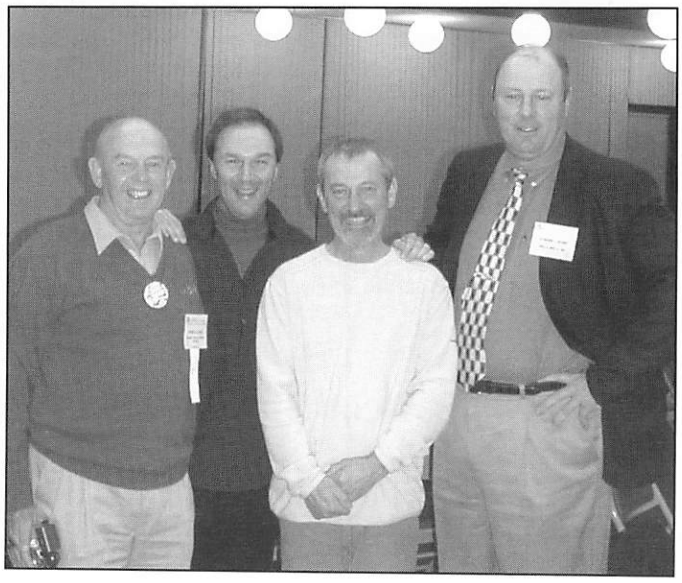
On Memorial Day weekend, I decided to call Auntie Kay in Watsonville and see how things were in California. She said that she was doing fine, and that when she had seen Uncle Bing a few weeks earlier he was looking much better, and was starting to make plans for a new album. We had a nice visit, twenty minutes or so, and I promised to check in again in a few weeks. Three days later, Mary Rose called to tell me that Auntie Kay was dead, of lung cancer. She was only in the hospital for 36 hours, and never told anyone she was sick. Later that day, Uncle Bing called me to tell me how shocked and saddened he was, and it was the most upset I ever heard him. He assured me that he had NO IDEA she had been ill, he would have taken her to the Mayo Clinic, got the best doctors, etc, etc. But they were so much alike, Kay and Bing, stoic in the face of adversity, not wanting people to fuss over them. She had a great personal dignity which was at the core of who she was.

During the summer and fall of 1974, there were a few letters and phone calls back and forth to Hillsborough, with my excitement building for the Crosby. Shortly after New Year's Day, 1975, I piled my suitcase and golf clubs into the back of my 1973 Plymouth Valiant and headed for California. My plan was to get there a couple of weeks before the tournament, and beat some of the rust off my game, since you can't practice much in the snow and ice in Spokane in December. First stop was San Francisco, where I shook off the dirt from my spikes and played a few holes with Uncle Bing at his nearby club, the Burlingame Country Club. I don't recall much about the round, except how warm it was in the Bay Area after the winter blizzards in Spokane. Then I trekked on down to Carmel, and settled into Mary Rose's spare bedroom for the duration. It was an idyllic time for a 22year old fresh college graduate. Every day was golf from dawn to dusk, hit practice balls, practice putting, then play Pebble Beach or Cypress Point, then come home to a fabulous home cooked meal from a darling Aunt, who took great delight in the copious quantities of food I could ingest.

A couple of days before the pros and celebrities arrived, Uncle Bing showed up in town, and called to see if I wanted to meet him at Cypress for a bit of golf the next day. Of course I was up for that, so we planned to meet at the Pro Shop at 7:30 the next morning. When I got there, Uncle Bing was already sitting on the trunk of his car, changing into his golf shoes. Then he asked the assistant pro if there were any caddies who could play a bit....and he said there were a couple of single digit handicappers back there. So Bing hired the two kids to fill out a foursome, plus two more to carry bags, and away we went. I remember thinking at the time that there were undoubtedly hundreds of the wealthiest, most prominent citizens of Carmel/Pebble Beach who would have loved to be in that foursome with Bing Crosby, and here he goes and hires a couple of caddies. How typical of Bing.

I could tell a lot of stories about golf with Uncle Bing, and my three years of playing in the Crosby as his guest, in fact, I could probably write a book about it, which I won't do here. I'll confine myself to a few of the more interesting tidbits. Uncle Bing, by the way, even in his early 70's was still an accomplished player. He had lost some distance, and I don't think he was ever real long off the tee anyway, but he had beautiful tempo, a graceful swing, and nice touch around the greens. He was very capable of playing to a seven or eight. I think he shot 83 or 84 that day at Cypress with the caddies. By the way, on the famed 222 yard 16th hole at Cypress, which features a long carry across the ocean, Bing is one of only three or four people to ever make a hole-in-one there.

Even though I was a college player, and a 2 handicapper, nothing I'd ever done in golf prepared me for the nerves of the first tee in the Crosby. My pro partner that first year was a journeyman named Bob Eastwood, and when we were announced on the first tee at Pebble Beach, the fairway was lined two deep with spectators up both sides. Then the loudspeaker booms out, "Ladies and Gentlemen, now on the tee from Spokane Washington, the nephew of our host, amateur Howard Crosby." I was just praying that my shot wouldn't kill a spectator! I hit the most beautiful little heeled slice up the left side of the fairway, and nobody died. For that, I was very grateful.



Howard Crosby (far right) at Hofstra with (l to r) Ron Field, Ken Crossland and Michael Crampton.

I had so many wonderful memories during those three years at the Crosby, and lots of time to interact with Uncle Bing, who was so generous to invite me and pay my way. I think he enjoyed the fact that I loved golf, and was good at it,

and didn't seem to want anything else out of him. The second year I played there, on the Saturday round my partner and I were playing Pebble Beach, which is where the TV coverage was. I reached the 17th tee about 1:30, which was the scheduled air time, and I could see the cameras panning across the fairway, back to the tee as we stepped up to hit. Well, of course, I hit a terrible five iron into the front bunker some 20 yards short of the pin. Faced with an extremely difficult trap shot, I hit one of the best shots of my life, an explosion to three feet, and saved par! I was elated, and certain this had been captured on national TV. As I made my way up the famous par five 18th, after two good shots, I hit a nine iron a bit right, and the ball plugged in the right trap. Facing a difficult buried lie, downhill with the ocean wall just over the green, I was able to explode the ball out to two feet, and again saved par. Two great sand saves on national TV. As I walked off the green, I saw Uncle Bing standing there, and he said "Hey, great shot Howard! I've got to get up in the tower, we're on the air in three minutes." I guess on Saturday, air time was 2 o'clock, but on Sunday it would be 1:30. Oh well.....

Another great memory....Aunt Mary Rose's husband, Jim Pool, was a retired navy man, a chief petty officer who served on board the Saratoga and the Yorktown during WWII. Jim was never much impressed with celebrities, and didn't care much for the parties at the tournament, which Mary Rose loved. But one year, he read the astronaut Alan Shepherd, who was the only navy man in among the early astronauts, was playing in the tournament and was going to attend the sponsor's cocktail party. For days, all Jim could talk about was whether or not Bing could introduce him to Commander Shepherd. Mary Rose assured him that he could, but he wouldn't let it rest. Finally, the big moment arrives....I'm standing with Mary Rose and Jim in a room full of people, lots of movie stars, etc., and Jim spots Alan Shepherd. He practically grabs Mary Rose and drags her over to Bing, where she says: "Bing, Jim would really like to meet Alan Shepherd, could you get him off my back." So we walk over to Alan Shepherd, and Bing says, "Alan, I'd like to introduce you to my brother-in-law, Jim Pool." Before Alan can say much, Jim says: "Ah shoot Bing, Commander Shepherd and I were in the same canoe club together!" And God bless Alan Shepherd, he immediately recognized that Jim was ex-navy, and he spent the next twenty minutes sharing old sea dog stories with Jim. I know that was one of the highlights of Jim's life, 'cause to him, Navy Commander Alan Shepherd was the biggest celebrity there could ever be.

During my years of playing in the Crosby, I began to get the understanding of just how big a star Uncle Bing really was. Here was an event filled with current movie and TV celebrities, but I would overhear fans in the gallery saying things like "I think I saw Bing" or "I heard Bing was behind 14 green." He was in a different galaxy than the rest of them.

That same year, Mac Davis was to be the headline showman for the annual clambake show. As a player, I had a ticket for the dinner and the show, and I went expecting to see Mac Davis. To my surprise, out on the stage walked Bing Crosby. He told the audience that Mac had a cold, and he was going to pinch hit for him. He had Joe Bushkin's band, and he proceeded to rip through a two hour show, including a twenty minute medley of his million sellers, and never missed a beat. I was sitting in the front row, and to this day, it remains by far the best concert I've ever seen. At age 71, coming off major lung surgery a year earlier, with little or no rehearsal, he was the most polished and charismatic on stage performer I've ever seen.

After Bing fell from the stage in Los Angeles in March of 1977, I never saw him again. Aunt Mary Rose told me that he'd aged terribly, and the fall had taken a lot out of him, and she said he looked like a little old man. But apparently he rallied one more time, and recorded the fabulous "Seasons" album, and then performed the two week sellout engagement at the Palladium in London in early October. On October 14, I opened my mail and saw Uncle Bing's invitation to the 1978 Crosby. A minute or two later, the phone rang and I heard the news. I turned down the invitation to play.....it just wouldn't be the same without him.

Twenty six years have passed now, and with the passing of Bob Hope this past summer, and Donald O'Connor the other day, the contemporaries are all gone. When I was flying back from London last week, British Airways had Bob Hope movies on channel 15 as a tribute. The day's selection was "Road to Utopia." And Bob Hope was funny, and charming, but it was Bing Crosby who radiated through that film some 60 years later. The magic, the charm, and the voice are as vibrant as ever.

During the Gonzaga event this past May, Bing's voice covered the campus over the loudspeakers all weekend long. And with over 1900 recordings, they didn't run short of material. In getting ready for the event, I put together a nine piece jazz band, and with the help of some really talented musicians, we recreated the charts for fifteen of Bing's great songs, which we played for the event. (And also recorded as a tribute CD). When we started on the project, I think some of the musicians, who are jazz guys and old rock band musicians, expected to be bored with the project, thinking it would all be big band era ballads and such. What they found, though, was that the music was complex, with tempo changes and multiple key changes, and just plain fun. They all loved it. And we all learned, once again, that before Bing was America's troubadour, and before the Christmas shows, and the Road pictures, Bing Crosby was one of the great pioneer jazz singers. No popular singer in history has ever approached his versatility. And Mr. Sinatra notwithstanding, it was Bing Crosby who was the voice of the 20th Century.

Thanks to the advent of CDs and DVDs, I'm getting a larger and larger permanent collection of Bing's work. I'd like to have it for my children, and someday my grandchildren, for as the actress Jane Wyman said, "There will never be another Bing Crosby."

Howard Crosby

Celluloid Crosby

Keith Parkinson looks at one of Bing's early films.

In the last issue of BING, I covered *The Big Broadcast* (1932) in some detail. The Crosby feature films preceding and following that Paramount production were also from Paramount. The studio had obviously decided that the target audience for the new popular radio and recording attraction, Bing Crosby, was the youthful college set. Both *Confessions of a Co-ed* (1931) and *College Humor* (1933) were set in colleges of further education. And co-educational at that.

In fact, the first of the two college films did not entrust Bing with any acting. He sang one solo and once with the Rhythm Boys. His first film as a Paramount contractee was the 1933 movie, by which time the Rhythm Boys phase of his career was behind him and his Mack Sennett comedies were proving him to be a competent light comedian. Those half dozen Educational shorts had a phased theatrical release between September, 1931 and January, 1934. Paramount also acted as distributors for *Please* and *Just an Echo*. Those two comedy shorts came about after an approach was made to Paramount by Arvid Gillstrom. He was an independent producer who wanted the studio to distribute a dozen two reelers. Half of them would feature Bing and a further six would star Harry Langdon. Langdon had been a popular silent screen comedian whose popularity had rapidly waned. Gillstrom operated on the basis that if you catch them on the way down or before they become famous, leading players come cheap. Paramount seemed slow in realising what a find they had in Bing. The Gillstrom shorts were in no way prestigious. It amounted to Bing taking two steps back to his pre-Mack Sennett days. As things transpired, Bing only made two Gillstrom shorts. Both of these two-reelers were shot back-to-back in the late spring of 1933 but were not released until after *College Humor* premiered in the summer of that year.

The stars of *Confessions of a Co-ed* were Phillips Holmes and Sylvia Sidney. They were both box-office draws at the time but the film was a disappointment to Paramount. The studio must have known they had a potential clinker on their hands when no screenplay writer took credit. Instead the opening titles let us know that it was "based on the diary of an anonymous college girl". In the UK no one had any idea what a co-ed was so the distributors decided to release it as *Her Dilemma.* But even a Mills and Boon title could not create interest at the box-office.

Mary Carlisle makes eyes at the Professor in 'College Humor.'

The Crosby content consisted of a reprise of "Out of Nowhere", which he had sung in his first Mack Sennett short, and "Ya Got Love", which was a Rhythm Boys number. There is no studio recording of the latter song available for appraisal but it turned up in the early 1980s on Volume 17 of "Going Hollywood", the Australian soundtrack LP series. It is typical Rhythm Boys material.

Two years later *College Humor* became the first of three films Bing signed to make with Paramount. Obviously, a three film deal indicated that the studio was a little unsure of Crosby's box-office potential. Bing had no doubts that Paramount was the studio for him. Both Warner Bros. and Fox were willing to sign him for more money up-front than Paramount offered. However, the Paramount offer incorporated increases based on box-office success. Even though Paramount might have had initial doubts about his pulling power Bing knew that his star was in the ascendance. Ultimately the Paramount deal would be worth more. There was another non-financial reason for Bing's selection of film studio. When he was singing at the Cocoanut Grove in his days as a single man he began a lifelong friendship with Gary Cooper. Coop was with Paramount and Bing respected the judgement of a friend and colleague. Bing's decision was justified. By the time *College Humor* was in the can Paramount knew they had a money-maker on their books. They signed Bing to a contract calling for four pictures over the next two years.

Their eventual confidence in Crosby can be illustrated in two ways. They employed Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston to write the film's songs for Bing. *College Humor* was the first Crosby picture to have songs specially written for him to perform. The tunesmiths composed three songs which fitted neatly into the plot and suited Bing's style. It was a well deserved assignment for Coslow and Johnston. They had written "Just One More Chance". That had already been sung by Bing in a couple of early screen appearances and it had been heavily featured by him in his radio broadcasts. "Learn to Croon", "Moonstruck" and "Down the Old Ox Road" were associated with Bing forever after he introduced them in *College Humor.*

The second thumbs up for their new signing by Paramount is apparent in the way the studio rescheduled *College Humor* around Bing's radio commitments. The film was originally slated to start at the beginning of the year. Bing was contracted to a twice weekly fifteen minute show for Chesterfield called "Music That Satisfies". Broadcast live from New York at nine o'clock in the evening, Bing's commitment was for fifteen weeks from the beginning of January. The first week of April was the earliest that Bing would be available for filming in California with the last four of his radio shows being broadcast from Los Angeles. The filming delay also caused Paramount to recast some contractees already announced to appear in the film. The studio's alternative would have been to carry them on salary without the actors earning their keep. This resulted in Buster Crabbe, Randolph Scott and Frances Dee being given assignments to other Paramount pictures. Dee was to have been Bing's leading lady but the re-arranged shooting schedule meant that the part went to Mary Carlisle.

The credits at the beginning of *College Humor* fail to make mention of a couple of individuals connected with the movie who became prominent in motion pictures in later years. Marjorie Reynolds was a dancer in the film almost ten years before she co-starred with Bing in *Holiday Inn.* And writer-producer-director Joseph L. Mankiewicz was then under contract to Paramount as a writer. His job was to improve the work of others. In this case *College Humor* screenplay writers Claude Binyon and Frank Butler had their work tampered with by the man who went on to script *All About Eve* (1950) and *Guys and Dolls* (1955).

College Humor received cool reviews. Even the usually supportive Los Angeles press found it hard to show much enthusiasm. Jimmy Starr gave it a "fair" rating for his newspaper, calling it an episodic yarn. The following week the same newspaper - the "Los Angeles Evening Herald Express" - referred to it as a hodge-podge. The North American review that mattered for all premiered movies was that given in "Variety". The show-business bible called it "a light, frothy musical that doesn't give the customers much of a mental workout". In other words, don't bother unless there's nothing else playing downtown. Even Bing himself couldn't find anything to say in its favour. When he came to re-record its songs for his 1954 musical autobiography he introduced them by saying he never knew what the story was all about.

Paramount did all they could to promote the film at the box-office, with Bing's radio tie-in appearances being most appropriate as he was still primarily regarded as a wireless performer. To coincide with the film's initial showings Bing sang "Learn to Croon" and "Moonstruck" on the CBS "California Melodies" programme. The following week the film's main cast re-assembled for a half hour preview programme for the "Hollywood on the Air" series. Personal appearances also provided publicity, albeit on a local basis. It was Los Angeles moviegoers that had the benefit of seeing Bing on stage and screen when he turned up accompanied by cast members at a couple of theatres towards the end of June, 1933. Naturally, the Paramount owned theatres had first call on his services. The company offered Bing $4,000 a week to make personal appearances to further promote *College Humor* in their cinemas. Bing declined for the very good reason that Dixie Lee was due to give birth to son Gary any day. In fact, Gary made his debut on June 27th.

Meanwhile, how did the Brits regard Bing? His recordings were the only publicity he had received so far. He could hardly be regarded as big box-office based on his early screen appearances. Yet when the Plaza cinema in Iver, Bucks, re-opened after redecoration on 14th May, 1934, the opening attraction was *College Humor.* Whoever made film rental bookings for that cinema had seen Bing's popularity build and decided to capitalise on the good word of mouth surrounding *Going Hollywood* which was released in the U.K that same month.

Finally, a puzzle. Just how long was the running time of *College Humor*? Maltin's "Movie and Video Guide" pins it down to 80 minutes. Scheuer's rival publication, "Movies on TV" , clocks it at 84 minutes. Turn to Robert Bookbinder's "The Films of Bing Crosby" to find which one is correct and you'll find he gives it a 68 minutes timing. We know that Coslow and Johnston wrote an additional song for the film. That was "I'm a Bachelor of the Art of Ha-cha-cha". Even if that was edited out of the movie it seems unlikely that one song accounts for 16 minutes time. Unless the song is as ungainly as its title.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith Parkinson continues his alphabetical look at Bing's film career.

NEWMAN, LIONEL (1916-1989) Composer. The only link Lionel Newman has with a Crosby picture is his work on *Say One For Me* (1959). Newman supervised and conducted the 20th Century-Fox sound stage orchestra for the film's score. He had no involvement with the film's songs, which were written by Cahn and Van Heusen. His work for Fox embraced a handful of memorable scores such as *How to be Very, Very Popular* (1955) and *North to Alaska* (1960) but he was never in the front rank of Hollywood composers. He was the brother of composer Alfred Newman (see our previous issue) and the uncle of composer / songwriter Randy Newman.

NICHOLS, DUDLEY (1895-1960) Screenwriter and director. Nichols directed three long forgotten films. Otherwise his fame rests with his screenplays. They are memorable. His work for *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) is fondly remembered. That film neatly balanced comedy with pathos. There was a later Crosby link. It was Nichols' screenplay for the 1939 film of *Stagecoach* which formed the basis for the 1966 remake in which Bing played Doc Boone. Nichols was highly regarded by his peers because of the way he could make serious subjects appeal to moviegoers. Examples from his three decades at the top of his profession are *The Informer* (1935), *The Fugitive* (1947) and *The Tin Star* (1957). He won one Academy Award for *The Informer* and was also nominated for *The Long Voyage Home* (1940), *Air Force* (1943) and *The Tin Star.*

NIVEN, DAVID (1909-1983) Actor who proved he could have been just as successful as a writer. Niven was just passing through Shepperton studios, Middlesex, at the time he established an onscreen link with Bing. That was for the film *The Road to Hong Kong* in 1962. The two had met previously when Niven guested on Bing's radio show in the late 1930s. For the British made *Hong Kong* Niven was seen as a Lama reading "Lady Chatterley's Lover". Niven's film career has been well documented by himself in a couple of truth stretching autobiographies with Sheridan Morley attempting to put the record straight with "The Other Side of the Moon". What is indisputable is that Niven entertained filmgoers for almost half a century. He was an extra in the 1935 *Mutiny on the Bounty* and a shadow of his former self due to Motor Neurone Disease when his lines in *The Curse of the Pink Panther* (1983) had to be dubbed. Between those two appearances he was as much at home playing Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1948 as he was in *Vampira* (1974) when he failed to convince us as Dracula. His best years both as actor and box-office draw were the 1950s. In *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956) he delighted as Phileas Fogg and in *Separate Tables* two years later his dramatic performance won him an Oscar.

NOBLE, RAY (1907-1978) Bandleader and composer. Bing's British rival for vocal popularity in the 1930s was Al Bowlly. Bowlly's best recordings were made with Noble. Noble received billing in a couple of pictures featuring Bing, although the two did not appear on screen together. Noble appeared with his orchestra in *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1935) in which he played "Why the Stars Come Out at Night". Also in that picture were two of his earlier hits. Both were his own compositions. "The Very Thought of You" was recorded by Bing in 1934 and "Goodnight Sweetheart", was a hit for Al Bowlly. Ten years later Noble was one of the five band-leader/pianists in the finale of *Out of This World*, the film in which Eddie Bracken borrowed Bing's voice. Until 1934 Noble led EMI's house band, the New Mayfair Dance Orchestra. Noble's time in the U.S.A. - initially with Bowlly - made him a radio star and although he returned to Britain from time to time he found the work in the UK was not as lucrative. When he retired in the mid 1950s, Noble made America his home.

NORTON, JACK (1882-1958) Character actor who specialised in playing amiable drunks, which he was in *Anything Goes* (1936) and *Blue Skies* (1946). In addition he was in three other Crosby films. He was cast as music publisher Lilley in *Going My Way* (1944), a waiter in *Here Come the Waves* (1944) and a bus boy in *Variety Girl* (1947). Norton came to movies after a long career in vaudeville. He quit films at the end of the 1940s. And he never touched alcohol in his life.

NOT FOR ALL THE RICE IN CHINA Song. Irving Berlin wrote it and Bing sang it in a medley in *Blue Skies* (1946). Bing did not make a studio recording of the song.

NOW THAT YOU ARE MAN AND WIFE Song. In *East Side of Heaven* (1939) Bing plays a singing postal messenger. In an early sequence in the film he calls up Mr. and Mrs. James Monaco and serenades them with "Now That You Are Man and Wife". Probably few members of the audience of the time saw anything significant in the couple on the receiving end of Bing's vocal. It was James V. Monaco who wrote the music for the Crosby songs featured in the film.

NOW YOU HAS JAZZ Song. Together with the pawnshop sequence where Bing sings "Rhythm on the River" in the film of the same name, I find this the most watchable musical event in any Crosby movie. Written by Cole Porter for *High Society* (1956) Bing and Louis Armstrong claim the

audience's attention from the first to the last bars. When M-G-M released their compilation *That's Entertainment Part Two* in 1976 the "Now You Has Jazz" segment from *High Society* was included. The version released on the film's soundtrack album is just that, rather than a studio re-recording.

NUGENT, EDWARD (EDDIE) (1904-1995) Leading actor turned supporting actor. By the time Eddie Nugent appeared in the first of two Bing pictures he was taking supporting actor roles. He made dozens of films in the 1930s and then disappeared from the entertainment scene. He has a small part in *College Humor* (1933) whilst the following year's *She Loves Me Not* finds him fourth billed in the cast list as Buzz Jones. In *She Loves Me Not* it is the film producer father of Buzz who provides leading lady Kitty Carlisle with a break in movies.

NUGENT, ELLIOTT (1896-1980). Actor-director-playwright-screenwriter-novelist. Not a bad CV for someone who retired from films due to alcoholism and mental problems after directing Bing in *Just for You* (1952). In 1934 he directed his first Crosby picture, *She Loves Me Not.* There was then a gap of twelve years before he directed his second Bing film, *Welcome Stranger.* Between that one and his last film there is a further Crosby link in that he directed *My Favorite Brunette*, a Bob Hope starrer in which Bing made a gag appearance. Nugent made his first screen appearances in the mid 1920s, moving to Paramount as a director in 1932. The studio knew they could rely on him when it came to comedy, hence his work with Hope, Harold Lloyd and Danny Kaye. His most famous work as a playwright was "The Male Animal", a collaboration with James Thurber.

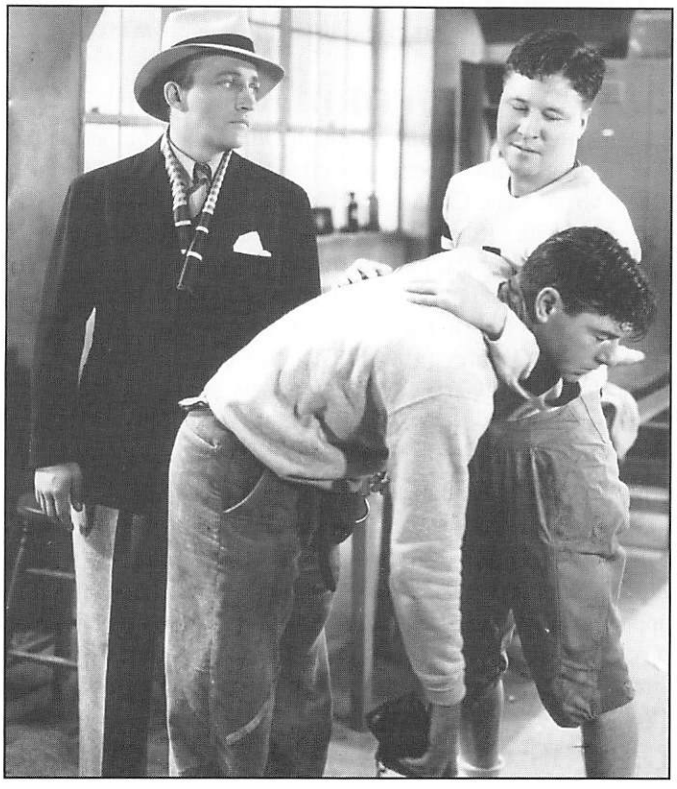
NYE, BEN (1907-1986) Make-up head at 20th Century-Fox studio. A familiar name on film credits, Nye made sure that Bing's scalp-doily was in place for the three movies he made for Fox towards the end of his career: *Say One For Me* (1959), *High Time* (1960) and *Stagecoach* (1966).

O PROMISE ME Song. Bing sings a snatch of this de Koven-Scot composition in *Here Comes the Groom* (1951). It is appropriately placed in the film in the scene featuring a wedding ceremony rehearsal. Bing never recorded the song.

O SANCTISSIMA Song. Nor did he make a recording of this one. He sings it in *The Bells of Saint Mary's* (1945). When Father O'Malley (Bing) visits Horace Bogardus (Henry Travers) - an about to be reformed capitalist - he hears the nuns singing "O Sanctissima" and joins in.

O 'TIS SWEET TO THINK Song. When Bing and Ann Blyth walk to church in *Top O' the Morning* (1949) they sing this traditional Irish tune with Thomas Moore's lyrics. Decca recorded the pair for a 78 to tie in the with the film's release and Ann Blyth's soprano blends well with Bing's baritone.

OAKIE, JACK [Lewis Delaney Offield] (1903-1978) Actor. Oakie lent his voice and comic persona to a few of Bing's early film appearances. Although they shared the same year of birth, they were first seen together on screen as tutor (Bing) and pupil (Jack) in *College Humor* (1933). In that film they sang "Down the Old Ox Road". In the same year they sang "Boo-boo-boo" for a *Hollywood on Parade* publicity short promoting *Too Much Harmony*. Oakie was part of the vaudeville act Dixon (Skeets Gallagher) and Day (Oakie), discovered by Broadway star Bing in that 1933 feature film. A couple of years later Oakie was one of the acting links between variety turns featured in *The Big Broadcast of 1936* in which Bing was on screen for four minutes. Then, towards the end of 1935, Bing and Oakie did their individual bits in the short *Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove.* And if they had been available, Paramount would have starred Fred MacMurray and Jack Oakie in *Road to Singapore.* Fortunately for both Crosby and Oakie that never came about and Oakie went on to play Benzini Napaloni in Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940), for which he received an Oscar nomination. Most of the films that followed found Oakie providing comic relief and by the end of the 1940s he had more or less forsaken films. His last two efforts before his retirement were well received - *The Rat Race* (1960) and *Lover Come Back* (1962).



Bing watches Jack Oakie support Richard Arlen in 'College Humor'

O'CONNOR, DONALD (1925-2003) Actor. Eighteen years separated the two films in which O'Connor starred with Bing. He made his feature film debut as Bing's schoolboy brother Mike Beebe in *Sing You Sinners* (1938). His second Crosby picture teamed him as Bing's fellow performer in *Anything Goes* (1956). O'Connor's first time on screen was as part of the family circus act in *Melody for Two* (1937). After *Sing You Sinners* he didn't get the break he expected. Paramount did not build him up and he eventually went to Universal to appear in a string of low budget pictures. They appealed to followers of "B" musicals but were hardly audience pullers. His career received a boost of sorts when Universal decided to star him a series of supporting pictures with Francis, the talking mule. It was in the middle of his Francis period that he was given a part in what is generally regarded as the best musical about Hollywood - *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). That film lead to appearances in other major musicals but by then the Hollywood musical was in decline. *Call Me Madam* (1953) and *There's No Business Like*

Showbusiness (1954) were too late in the day for O'Connor to build a new career in musicals. Paramount gave him a chance to act when he played the title role in *The Buster Keaton Story* (1957) but by then he seemed to care little about movies and turned to composing music for the concert hall. There was one Crosby link for his last big screen appearance when he was a narrator for *That's Entertainment* (1974).

O'CONNOR, UNA (1880-1959) Actress. Una O'Connor specialised in playing Irish maids, so as Mrs. Breen in *The Bells of Saint Mary's* (1945) she was cast to type. It was her only Crosby picture. Her career began with the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and after making a couple of films in the UK she found her career niche in Hollywood. You can see more of her in her "Mrs. Breen" mode in *David Copperfield* (1935) as Mrs. Gummidige and *The Plough and the Stars* (1938) as Mrs. Gogan. Her last film was *Witness for the Prosecution* (1958).

ODETS, CLIFFORD (1906-1963) Playwright, screenwriter and director. Although Odets played a peripheral part in Bing's film career it proved to be of major significance. Odets wrote "The Country Girl", which started its Broadway run in 1950. It provided Bing with his finest acting opportunity when Paramount filmed it four years later. Odets wrote three screenplays which have stood the test of time: *Humoresque* (1947), *The Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) and *Wild in the Country* (1961). That trio provided memorable roles for John Garfield, Tony Curtis and Elvis Presley respectively.

O'DONNELL, WALTER 'SPEC' (1911-1986) Actor. Crosby buffs remember this gawky actor for three insignificant parts he played at the dawn of Bing's film career. He was one of the college boys who sang "The Stein Song" in the 1930 short *Two Plus Fours*, he had an uncredited appearance in *One More Chance* (1931) and he was an office boy in *The Big Broadcast* (1932). He was in pictures from the silent days and faded from the Hollywood scene in the early 1940s.

DENNIS O'KEEFE (1908-1968) Actor. Question: In which Bing Crosby film will you find Dennis O'Keefe listed with the actor credits? Answer: None. That's because he was still undergoing his acting apprenticeship when he played a bit part as a heckler in *Rhythm on the Range* (1936) under the name of Bud Flanagan. In the UK that could only serve to confuse him with one half of the music hall act Flanagan and Allan. However that was not the reason he became Dennis O'Keefe. The name change was at the behest of M-G-M. He was born Edward Vance Flanagan and after touring with his parents as part of their vaudeville act he wrote a number of scripts for the "Our Gang" series of comedy shorts before becoming a bit player. The year after making *Rhythm on the Range* M-G-M signed him to a contract and built him up into a leading player. Films like *Topper Returns* (1941), *T-Men* (1948) and *All Hands on Deck* (1961) show that he never made it onto the "A" list of male leads. He was at his best in action pictures. In 1958 he had an American television series, "The Dennis O'Keefe Show". Apart from his appearance in *Rhythm on the Range*, he had uncredited appearances in other Bing films namely *Reaching For The Moon* (1930 - as a dance extra), *Double Or Nothing* (1937 - as a club patron), *Too Much Harmony* (1933- as a cafe extra) and *Mississippi* (1935). He died from lung cancer.

Keith Parkinson

Another Bing celebration in Minnesota

Bing Crosby's longtime connections with Minnesota came to light at a special 100th Anniversary "Crosby Cavalcade film festival and musical salute featuring Kathryn Crosby on Saturday, July 26, at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, near Minneapolis / St. Paul, Minnesota. Excerpts from Bing's films were presented by Bob DeFlores, and our President Kathryn Crosby performed in a tribute at 7 p.m. Also, Twin Cities vocalists Arne Fogel and Maud Hixson, with Rick Carlson on piano, joined her performance in the Fine Arts Auditorium at Normandale. An article in the Sun Newspaper stated:

"Among the long-standing Crosby connections to the area are film archivist DeFlores of Richfield; his 3M radio and television technical collaborators; Minnesota Twins owner, Carl Pohlad; and the city of Stillwater, birthplace of the crooner's mother. DeFlores – who is helping Kathryn Crosby restore her late husband's personal film collection – is the pivotal player in bringing the salute to Minnesota. He met Crosby in 1977 when he uncovered some rare film clips and established himself as a major film biographer. In December of last year, DeFlores appeared at a kickoff fete for the Crosby Anniversary at Hofstra University in New York in which Bing's widow dubbed DeFlores the family's "film savior. Crosby's connection with Maplewood-based 3M Corp. began in 1947 when his "Philco Radio Time became the first radio show to use the company's new magnetic recording tape for delayed broadcasts. A few years later, Bing Crosby Enterprises worked with 3M to perfect videotape for the television industry. This led the firm to become a prime TV sponsor of the celebrated Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Pebble Beach until Crosby's death in 1977.

Carl Pohlad's relationship with the man called the "world's first multi-media entertainer goes back much further. It was Crosby who recruited Pohlad out of Iowa during the Depression years to play football at Gonzaga.

Bing's connection to Stillwater came to light when he asked DeFlores and radio show host and singer, Arne Fogel, if they could locate the original home of his mother, Kate Harrigan, in the historic Minnesota town."

It seems that the celebration went well as **Arne Fogel** himself reports:

This event went like an absolute dream. Thanks to the good graces of Bob DeFlores, and the generosity of our friend Kathryn Crosby, I got to participate in this show, helping to promote it on the radio, rehearsing, etc. all of which was a very memorable, joyful experience. And let me tell you, it's quite a thrill to sing "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" and "Love Won't Let You Get Away" (duet with Maud Hixson) to an audience that includes Kathryn Crosby!

Kathryn originally arrived in the Twin Cities on

Thursday afternoon, the 24th. I got to connect with her at radio station KLBB-AM 1400, where she and Bob DeFlores were being interviewed. It was great seeing Kathryn again, and I was particularly proud that our initial meeting in my town took place at the very station from which my program, "ARNE FOGEL PRESENTS BING & CO." is heard every Friday evening. The studio we were in is not a particularly spacious one; lots of people elbowing each other in a very limited space, but Kathryn was unfazed. She is cool. And, as always, that disarming way of making every person she comes in contact with feel special. Actually, Kathryn and Bob DeFlores made several promotional broadcast appearances for the upcoming event, which was fortunate, as the coverage of music in the newspapers here in Minneapolis is now almost totally devoted to post-rock-era forms; there was one very nice mention in the paper the day before the event, but it could have easily gone unnoticed. So, thank God for radio and TV!

I didn't see Kathryn again until Saturday, the day of the show. We arrived at the venue at the same time for rehearsal, chatted for a bit, then got to work. Our piano player, Rick Carlson was already there. When given the responsibility of choosing the "right" keyboard man to accompany Kathryn and the show from the long list of terrific players in the Twin Cities, Bob and I had no trouble making a decision. Rick is an incredible jazz & swing musician, and more importantly, he's a man dedicated to the "art" of accompanying singers. He listens, he studies, he glorifies the singer he's backing. That's why I choose him for all of my musical projects, and that's why I chose him for this event. As I'd hoped, he and Kathryn hit it off immediately.

Kathryn also seemed to approve enthusiastically of my duet partner for the Crosby-Clooney number "Love Won't Let You Get Away". Maud Hixson is a relatively new singer in the Twin Cities, who is becoming a favorite. As we rehearsed, I became aware of the fact that Kathryn was at all times attentive to every aspect of the show as it was coming together, paying attention and offering comments regarding even those aspects of the program in which she was not directly involved. This is the sign of a real professional. In that regard, I was impressed by Kathryn's ability during the rehearsal of her own musical numbers. I think that Kathryn would be the first to admit that she's not a legit "vocalist", yet she conducted her rehearsals like a musician, aware of her keys, her musical entrances and exits, the strengths & limitations of her range, all with the professionalism and savvy of the seasoned performer that she is. Mrs. Crosby often tends to describe herself in very self-deprecating terms in her books; but let me assure you, she demonstrated total self-confidence during the long day of rehearsal and presentation for this program. In addition, she demonstrated a completely giving and generous sense of showmanship, putting the rest of us totally at ease and helping to increase our enthusiasm for the show and for working with her.

I think it's important to note that, although Kathryn was very much the in-person "star" of the program, at no time did she ever lose sight of the fact that the real "star" and subject of our program was Bing. Everything Kathryn said, sang, or did during the evening was in reference to Bing and her life with him.

The show itself was huge success, with a near-capacity crowd of enthusiastic Crosby fans in attendance. Bob DeFlores has hosted other programs of vintage film here at the Normandale College Fine Arts Auditorium, and fans know to expect the very best in vintage material from Bob and his fantastic film collection. They came expecting lots of Bing, and they weren't disappointed: Film clips, TV clips, news footage, singing, joking, Bing at 60, Bing at 30, Bing at his best and rarest, from TV I hadn't seen in 40 years to the familiar strains of "White Christmas"...And all due to the "king of clips", Bob DeFlores (with a little help from his friends Greg Van Beek, Ron Hall, George McCabe).

Bob and I were shown in interview clips discussing Bing's musical impact and film persona as part of an original "mini-documentary" on Bing and his multi-generational appeal, and Bob even put together a surprise film tribute to Kathryn featuring memorable scenes from her pics "Anatomy Of A Murder", "The Big Circus", "The Seventh Voyage Of Sinbad", "Living It Up", and others.

During her portions of the show, Kathryn "crumpled the folks", as Bing would say. Her presentation takes the form of a charming "one-woman show"-type reminiscence and book-reading. It was similar (but not identical) to her final-night stage presentation at Hofstra University last year. She sang a number of songs, joked, ad-libbed, and totally endeared herself to everyone she came in contact with. The college where the event was held was so blown away by her showmanship and graciousness that they named a special nursing scholarship program after her! Kathryn concluded the evening by signing copies of "My Last Years With Bing", and speaking at length to anyone and everyone who wanted to meet and talk with her.

Later, I had an opportunity to spend some time just relaxing and chatting with Kathryn and Bob DeFlores. It was a wonderful way to end a memorable day. One of the main things I remember about this long "end-of-the-event" conversation was the way Kathryn's face lit up with warmth and enthusiasm when I mentioned Crosby fan (and Kathryn's friend) Judy Schmid!

As for me, this was an experience I'll always treasure for a number of reasons, not the least among them the fact that my most frequent piano accompanist, brought in at our suggestion to accompany Kathryn, so impressed everyone, as I knew he would. I think Kathryn was really knocked out by his incredible musicianship. In addition, as a broadcaster who has been presenting Bing Crosby recordings on the air more or less weekly for over a quarter-century, I was filled with pride at being asked to participate both musically and as a resource for visual and recorded materials. For this I have to thank a loyal Twin Cities audience, with a very special "Thank You" to Bob DeFlores for his wonderful friendship and wise council.

A great day of total Crosbyness!

Arne Fogel www.arnefogel.com

Bing Crosby in Dublin (Ohio)

Barry Stapleton was the man behind the magnificent display at Gonzaga which we praised in our last edition. He now tells us of another successful Crosby event.

On August 1-3 the Ward Irish Music Archives presented our Bing Crosby exhibit at the Dublin, Ohio Irish Festival. We set up the exhibit on Friday (August 1st) during the day and by evening a contingent from Milwaukee came in by bus. We were given a good location for the exhibit and a very nice 40' x 60' tent that was very well lit. One major disappointment was that we were not listed in the brochure for the event handed out to patrons. I had seen their pre-brochure and we were listed twice, so I didn't expect this omission. The coordinators did apologize, but I do think it diminished the traffic we might have had. Still I was happy with the exhibit and the traffic we did get through the tent. The people running the festival were all very kind to us and all the entertainers. I feel that they provide more culture to their audience and because of that it is a good match for our exhibits.

This was only less than a week after the death of Bob Hope so there were many people who looked at the exhibit as a fond memorial towards Bing and Bob. We had a very diverse crowd coming through the tent including a bunch of young goth-punk-grunge-rockers who actually knew quite a bit about Bing. I should have gotten their picture!

Although the weather threatened all weekend it never rained during the actual fest-hours. On Monday when we were taking down our exhibit all hell broke loose and I jumped out of my shorts a few times with lightning strikes all around us. I was probably closer to Bing then ever before!

Dublin is not as dynamic as our festival in Milwaukee. It has a very laid back feel to it. The people are very warm and friendly and they do have a large focus towards kids activities. Once again I feel it's a nice place for the archives. I think I took our exhibits to Cleveland twice, and although I enjoy their festival hardly anyone recognized our exhibits. In Dublin I feel we're much more appreciated and people take the time to enjoy our exhibits.

I drove back to Milwaukee on Monday the 4th and immediately began preparations for our own Irish Fest which ran from August 14-17. Greg Van Beek will have a full report on this, I'm sure.

Barry Stapleton

(Editor: Our thanks to Barry for all he is doing to perpetuate Bing's memory. And yes, Greg does have a report on the Irish Fest as you will now read.)

When Irish Eyes Were Smiling On Bing

While others were spending the weekend holding candlelight vigils remembering Elvis Presley on the 26th anniversary of his death, Milwaukee was celebrating the life and times of Bing Crosby! The annual Irish Fest, held on the shores of Lake Michigan at Henry W. Maier Festival Park in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, paid homage to Bing Crosby in celebration of his centennial year.

Milwaukee Irish Fest is renowned as the world's largest Irish culture festival. It was established by members of Milwaukee's Irish community to showcase its rich Irish heritage. A showcase of Irish music, history, dance, drama, sports and culture, Irish Fest first premiered here in 1981. This year's event was held August 14-17, and featured a huge tent devoted to entirely to Bing Crosby memorabilia from the Ward Irish Music Archives' Barry Stapleton collection.

Barry was a little concerned about the Crosby display, however. "Given the success of last year's "History of Irish Rock" exhibit I had prepared myself for the fact that Bing Crosby might be a lesser attraction". However, his fears were quickly dispelled when at least as many people toured the tent for Bing! "I can't tell you how pleased I was to see the tent almost always full or half-full. I heard many wonderful comments about the display", said Barry. Indeed, the OnMilwaukee.com website listed the Archive tent with the Crosby collection as number two of the top five "must see" attractions at Irish Fest this year! It wasn't difficult to find the tent, as a large facade was created outside of it to make it look like an actual building, with Bing's name proudly displayed above the door on the marquee.

The main display was comprised of several panels containing no less than 120 full size 8 x 10 black & white photos of Bing, the majority of which coming from my collection. It was a popular attraction, as people passing through the tent would invariably stop and point out certain photos and exclaim "oh look, there's Bing with Jack Benny" or whomever they happened to recognize. Barry made a game of it, by listing the names of most of the people Bing was pictured with on a separate panel, under the heading "can you spot these people with Bing?" There were at least two dozen other display boards throughout the tent with various movie posters, sheet music, magazine covers, record labels, record album covers, advertisements, etc. neatly reproduced on them. There were even a few BING magazine covers for good measure. A most impressive display, to put it mildly!

Barry had two presentations scheduled in the tent, one Saturday at 4:30pm and one Sunday 1pm about "The Life and Legacy of Bing Crosby". Each were listed in the official program for the event, so patrons had advance knowledge of them. I was on hand for the Saturday presentation, and Barry had invited me to join him to discuss Bing's film and radio careers. I assembled an audio "montage" for the radio portion of my talk, lasting a little over 4½ minutes with the introductions to all of Bing's major radio series, save for the early Chesterfield *Music That Satisfies*, of which no copies are in circulation. Later, to add a visual aspect to my film presentation, I decided to pay tribute to the memory of Bob Hope by screening excerpts from the Road films, which were especially well received, judging by the thunderous applause at its conclusion from the SRO capacity crowd inside the tent. This being only 2½ weeks since Bob's passing, it was especially poignant and appropriate.

Barry Stapleton (left) and Greg entertain the crowd.

There were easily forty to fifty people crowded inside the tent for our presentation, with all seats taken, which was most gratifying to see. Among them were two prominent Milwaukee area radio DJ's, whom I introduced to the audience, giving each of their shows a "plug". Both Tom Shanahan, of WTKM 104.9FM in Hartford, Wisconsin, and David Hendrickson from WJUB AM1420 in Plymouth, Wisconsin each feature Bing on an almost daily basis during their respective times on the air. David is tentatively planning a daily series commencing in September to be called "Bing Sings", during which he will play one or two Crosby records between 6:30 and 6:40am. You can hear Tom's show from 8:30am to 9:30am (CST) weekdays via streaming audio on the Internet at www.wtkm.com .

I noted both before and after the presentation, there was a constant stream of people passing through the tent. It was never empty. Barry had the video presentation I assembled for the event at the Irish Music Archives with Kathryn Crosby and Buddy Bregman back in April on hand, and was screening it throughout the day. It was a popular attraction, as large groups of people would stop to watch. There were many young children and teenagers on hand as well. As Barry noted "it wasn't just a bunch of old-timers!" All told, over 127,000 people passed through the gates at Irish Fest during its four day run. Barry conservatively estimates that "a couple of thousand people could've come through the tent". I'd be willing to bet it was more like tens of thousands! No doubt about it, the magic of Bing Crosby still captivates, both young and old alike!

I should mention that it was originally planned to have both Kathryn Crosby and Bing's nephew Howard Crosby in town for the festival. Unfortunately, business commitments forced Howard to have to cancel early on, and then, following the passing of Bob Hope, Mrs. Crosby regrettably had to cancel as well, which was totally understandable. I'm sure they'll both be pleased to know Irish Fest and the Archives tent were a big success despite their absences.

Greg Van Beek

More about Gonzaga

Before the Gonzaga event, we wrote to several celebrities asking them to draft a letter for display at Gonzaga and it was pleasing that so many responded. The letter from golf legend Peter Alliss is shown below and we hope to be able to reproduce more of these letters in future editions of BING magazine. In the meantime, it may be of interest for members to see who responded. Letters were received from:

Peter Alliss: Don Babcock (nephew of Jimmy Van Heusen): Pat Boone: Dick Clark: Blythe Danner: Rhonda Fleming: Gerald Ford: Beverly Garland: Kitty Carlisle Hart: Florence Henderson: Gloria Jean: Ralph Kiner: Frankie Laine: Leonard Maltin: Jack Nicklaus: Twiggy

Peter Alliss wrote to Stephanie Plowman as follows:

I first met Bing Crosby in the mid 50s when I played in his tournament at Pebble Beach. It was a wondrous affair, the sun shone, the celebrities were "real" and some perhaps larger than life. a very different selection than one sees on the pro-am circuits of the world today. From the first moment we met, he put me totally at ease and his love of the game of golf was there for all to see.

We continued to see each other occasionally as the years went by but it wasn't until 1976 when he came to play in our BBC Pro-Celebrity Golf series from the Gleneagles Hotel that we really spent any amount of time together. He was charming, amusing, crowds came in their thousands to see our wondrous array of celebrities, Fred McMurray, Telly Savalas, Johnny Rutherford, the great racing driver, George C Scott, stars from the British stage, screen and sport, Phil Harris, also an American, tremendous names who gave such an enormous amount of pleasure.

I was working for ABC Television when Nathaniel won the Amateur Championship in San Francisco which still, in my view, is one of the great feats of all time. Never mind Tiger Woods, Nathaniel kept coming back when the cause looked entirely hopeless. How proud his father must have been when he raised that magnificent trophy on high.

It is fitting that Bing should have died on the golf course. The news came as a hammer blow and, as I have a long and personal friendship with Manuel Pinero, who was with him when he died, it was even more poignant as Manuel related those few fateful steps.

I hope your celebrations go off well and it was a privilege for me to have known Bing Crosby and to spend some intimate moments with him on the golf course.

Yours sincerely

Peter Alliss

Bix Jazz Festival

2003 also saw the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bix Beiderbecke who was born in Davenport, Iowa on March 10, 1903. In July, the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society organised their 32nd Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival in Davenport and **Edward Sturrup** attended. He wore one of his Bing T shirts he purchased at Gonzaga and received many favourable comments. Edward sent us a copy of the programme and it was nice to see an appropriate reference to Bing's centennial. The article continued:

Bing was a friend and roommate of Bix's during the early 1902s. In fact an old payroll record shows cornetist Bix being paid more than vocalist Bing. In later years, Bing often spoke fondly of Beiderbecke and praised his musical talents. In fact, when one writer went to Bing's Hollywood office, asking to interview him about Bix, he was about to be given the bum's rush. Luckily, Bing got word of the request, came in, shook hands, and said, "I'm never too busy to talk about Bix." He spent more than an hour with the writer doing just that.

The programme stated that **Joe Venuti** was born in 1903 too (September 16 seems to be the favourite date) and this is an anniversary we have rather overlooked. Joe played an important part in Bing's early career and also worked closely with him during the 1950s. Bing devotes several pages to his relationship with Joe in 'Call Me Lucky' and it's well worth getting out your copy now and reading the various stories about him (pages 255 to 262 in my copy).

Edward Sturrup also mentioned that he (and 12,000 others) attended the annual *Pops By The Sea* concert in Hyannis, Cape Cod in August. In honour of Bing and Bob's centenary, the Boston Pops Orchestra played "Road to Morocco", "Swinging On A Star", "Where the Blue of the Night", "Buttons & Bows" and "Thanks For The Memory".

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, Lancashire, UK

The coverage of the Spokane celebrations in the current BING was good. I gained the impression that the event was not as scholarly as Hofstra. There seemed to be some overlap in the subject matter covered but that provided an opportunity to do other Bing related things. Also I thought the last magazine was well on the road to integrating with Club Crosby. You gave good coverage to Stateside events and Bert's round up of radio and TV took in North America.

You didn't mention the prize for identifying 'Gort, Klaatu Barada Nikto' as coming from *The Day the Earth Stood Still.* If there's any money due to me please send it to the local dogs' home.

(Editor: The local dogs' home has been unlucky on this occasion! In our last issue, we praised the work of Canadian broadcaster Lorne Harasen at Gonzaga and since then he has been in touch.)

Lorne Harasen, Regina, Sask., Canada

Thanks so much for the kind comments. I considered it a great privilege. I genuinely loved the man for his great talent and persona and of course for his kindness to me.

When I came home [from Gonzaga] I called a long time broadcast colleague who was the wake-up man at the radio station where I did my Crosby interviews. Johnny Sandison is 78 years old, navy veteran in the second world war, who has not been well and misses the "business" very much. Johnny was a great personal friend of the late American band leader, Russ Morgan and still keeps in touch with Morgan's son Jack who continues one-nighters all over America. I called Johnny with details about the Gonzaga event.

At the end of it he expressed regret that both Morgan and Bing are not heard on radio very much. We have so-called "community" FM radio stations that are open to all sorts of programs and music. They avoid the formats of main stream radio and in their alternative manner draw many listeners. I suggested to Johnny that I ask the local station to give us two hours on a Sunday morning so that he could play Morgan and I would bring my Bing recordings. They jumped at the proposal and we were underway. The show was called "Two Old Friends With Two Old Friends." The public response was so positive that the station scheduled a repeat broadcast. My point is that once they turned on the microphones my friend's instincts immediately clicked in. I have been concerned about Johnny's health but I think I have found a way to keep him with us. Once again, Bing was part of something good.

I'm really sorry that I didn't meet you at Gonzaga. Too many things going on. I did meet a young woman from Kansas who "discovered" Bing in recent years and attended the Gonzaga event with her mother. I promised her a tape of two of Bing's radio programs and some rare recordings.

(Editor: What a nice story and it just shows what can be done.)

Frank Startup, Cirencester, Glos., UK

Please find enclosed a cheque and order form for the latest two volumes of Gord Atkinson's series. I ordered the rest directly from him in Spokane, and have received them: magnificent aren't they?

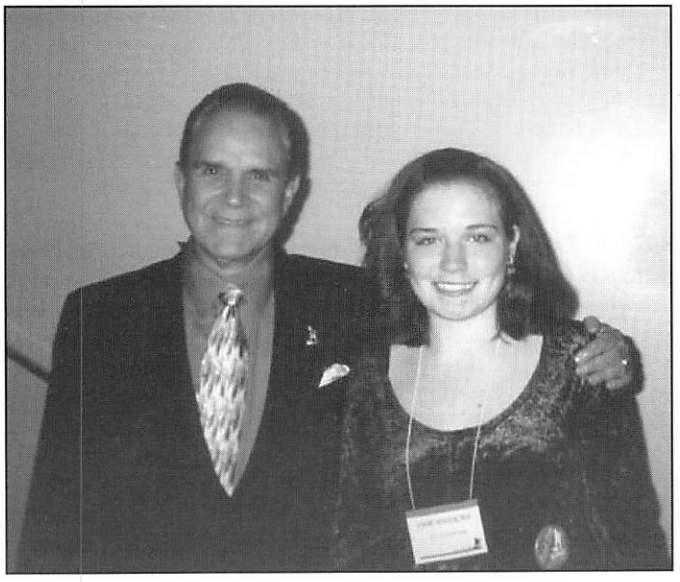
Since Gonzaga, I have joined the ICC and received copies of BING magazines from Michael Crampton. I wish that I had joined up years ago. I'm also reading your 'Day by Day' which is fascinating. After all these years to find such a wealth of excellent material is wonderful and I look forward to a long and happy association with you and other Crosby admirers through the ICC.

(Editor: Good to have you on board, Frank. You are amongst friends. Next we have news of possibly our youngest member.)

Wally Anthony, Leesburg, Florida, USA

Catherine Gatto came from Pennsylvania to Spokane for the Bing celebration all by herself at the age of 14. She is most likely the youngest member of Club Crosby and when it merges with ICC, it remains to be seen if she is still the youngest. She has been a member since eight years old. Catherine arrived at the Spokane airport at 10 PM on the Thursday night. We were to stay at the campus housing which were convenient accommodations. Each dorm unit had three bedrooms which shared a full and half bath. Priscilla Koenig was one of our dorm mates. Her license plate was LABING.

. . .I had read somewhere that Bing and his young friends used to swim off of a railroad bridge which spanned the Spokane river. Cat and I headed east on Mission and crossed Hamilton. We then crossed the river and then turned right and headed south along the river. The road turned to dirt and we traveled about 1/2 mile more and spotted a railroad bridge. I said to Cat, "I wonder if this could be the bridge? I'll get out of the car and take a picture of it." I opened my door, grabbed my camera, stood up and you could hear Bing singing as clear as a bell. Later that night, at the Club Crosby reception, I told this story to two different people. Each time they quickly went away without hearing the rest of the story. I think they were afraid of being trapped under the net when the boys would come to take me to the funny farm. Now back to the rest of the story. I said, "Cat, You've got to hear this." Cat got out of the car and said, "Wow that's neat. Where is the music coming from?" I replied, "I think the river must run somewhere behind the campus and they have the music coming from the loud speakers. Also, kids that age probably wouldn't stray too far from home. I think this must be the bridge."



Cat meets Rich Little at Gonzaga

Saturday evening was the Bing Banquet. What a gala affair that was. In the reception room was a large ice sculpture commemorating Bing's 100 years. We met Flip and Mary Crosby who said their father couldn't make it because of back problems. We told them to wish him well. At dinner we sat with a nice group of people including Hobie and Cathie Wilson. The Wilsons took Cat under their wings that weekend.

The meal was unbelievably good which is unusual for a crowd that size. The speakers were very interesting to listen to. Last and not least was Howard Crosby and the band. One song they did was "It Must Be True". The orchestration was a direct adaptation of the original. I asked them if they listened to the original a lot. They said they did and seemed pleased that it was noticed. Howard and his family posed with Cat for a picture and they couldn't have been nicer. He also gave Cat a copy of his CD in which he sang Bing's songs. She has played it so much, her mother threatened to throw it away.

We both found this weekend to be the experience of a lifetime.

Hominy Grits

Whilst on the subject of letters, one of the panels your Editor missed at Hofstra last year was "The Collections" (Panel X-A) when one of the speakers was Donald W. Jackanicz from the National Archives and Records Administration. Mr. Jackanicz supplied a very useful handout and Michael Crampton picked one up for me.

The handout includes examples of the types of items the National Archives have involving Bing, and Mr. Jackanicz kindly included various items of correspondence to and from Bing.

The story of how Bing asked for General Eisenhower to be supplied with hominy grits in 1944 has been told many times but I was fascinated to read the actual correspondence which took place between the two men. When Bing gets back to the USA from Europe in October 1944, he appears briefly on the *Kraft Music Hall* from New York and says that General Eisenhower would really like "a package of whole hominy grits." Bing then leaves New York for California on the Streamliner "City of San Francisco" and using the train note paper he writes in longhand to General Eisenhower in France as follows:

> Upon arrival in New York, went right to work on the Hominy Grits detail and if operations were successful some should be en route to you ere long.
>
> In an effort to clinch things, I have two different concerns committed to this project, and unless they fail me, you'll be grit-happy indeed.
>
> The press has cornered me on several occasions and wherever possible, I've tried to confine my remarks to the concerns expressed in the E.T.O. [European Theater of Operations] over the growing complacency at home. This I will accent on the radio and whatever outlets are available, and if my small voice and those of my friends has any persuasive powers, we may keep some of them on the ball around here.
>
> I'm grateful to the Army for affording me the richest experience of my life. The courage. resourcefulness, and general all-round class of our men is something every American should be proud of, and the privilege of watching them at work is something I'll never forget. They are wonderful.
>
> Thanks for the lunch and the use of your car. Your driver is a nice guy, and so capable. If I can do anything for you over here—command me.
>
> **Bing Crosby**
> 594 Mapleton
> Los Angeles

On October 28, the General responds:

> Dear Bing.
> Had I had the slightest idea that you were going to say anything on your radio program about my liking for hominy grits I would have kept still in all the languages I

know. My secretary tells me that already she has a couple dozen letters saying that hominy grits are on the way.

I enjoyed having you for lunch. Since your departure I have heard a number of people speak of your entertainments here, always in the highest terms.

Again let me express my thanks.

Sincerely,

Bing, no doubt a little embarrassed, writes back to the General on November 27.

I am sorry if my little slip on the radio caused you to be deluged with shipments of grits. At any rate you are now "loaded" with this delectable commodity, and should have enough to supply Supreme Headquarters with ease.

I have learned since coming home that returning actors have to be awfully careful what they say on the radio, or for the press. It was my first intention to say nothing about the trip because I feel actors should not be taking bows for doing so little when others are doing so much. But the people at home are so hungry for news, and the news-hounds chase you so desperately that it is impossible to avoid saying something or other. Unfortunately whatever is said is quite apt to be misquoted, and I hope if this has happened you will understand the sentiments were probably not my own.

We are working hard now on the Sixth War Loan, and hope the results will convince the men over there there's no letup in support from the people at home.

With sincere personal regards, and thanks for allowing me to visit the E.T.O.

Your friend,
Bing

Fascinating stuff! Bing corresponded with Ike over the years and the handout from the National Archives included a letter from Bing (who was then in the UK) to the General in 1961 inviting him to take part in Bing's Pro-Am at Pebble Beach. The correspondence is worth reading as you will see.

Dear General Eisenhower:

Sam Morse of the Del Monte Properties, Pebble Beach, has told me he has written to you, in the hope that he could intice you westward for our annual Pro-Amateur Golf Tournament at Pebble Beach in late January.

All of us would be tremendously happy if you could adjust your schedule, allowing your presence there at that time - either as a player, or as a spectator. I think that you would find it a very enjoyable occasion, and see some fine golf.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know whether or not you will be able to come. I am currently in England making a film, but plan to be home early in November.

Incidentally, we're staying at the home of Dr. Berns, and from some of the pictures around the house, it seems likely that you may have been a guest at one time or another when you were here during the war. Happily, the house is located right near Sunningdale, Wentworth, and the Berkshire golf clubs, so we are very conveniently installed.

The weather, too, has been unusually kind for England, and we're having some fine games over the week-ends. I think some of these courses are among the greatest in the world.

Anticipating a reply from you soon, and with my kindest respects

Sincerely yours,
Bing

The ex-President's response is negative.

Dear Bing:

My golf is entirely too erratic for me even to dream of accepting your kind invitation to participate in the Pebble Beach tournament. This I must say in spite of the fact that Arnold Palmer, whose broad back ought to be able to carry any dub anywhere, expressed a great desire through Maurie Luxford to take me on as a partner. However, I hope to be in Palm Springs in January, and harbor a faint hope that I might be able to run over for one day to see your tournament, about which I have heard so many complimentary things. After my schedule firms up, I will send you an indication as to whether I can make it.

I am interested in the fact that you are staying in Mr. Berns house near Sunningdale. He was very helpful to me, surgically, in 1942. One sunny day I recall that a group of us gathered on his lawn for an outdoor tea or a kind of picnic. Should you happen to see him personally I would be highly pleased if you would convey to him my warm greetings.

Thanks again for your nice invitation, and with best wishes to yourself,

Sincerely,

As we know, Bing also seemed to be on friendly terms with President Eisenhower's successor but how many people would have sent JFK a postcard? Bing was in Ireland in 1961 and on September 24 he sent a postcard bearing a picture of Bell Rock, Vale of Avoca, Co. Wicklow addressed to President Kennedy, White House, Washington DC and clearly it was received by the addressee. It is not easy to read all of Bing's handwriting but it says something like this:

Stockdale has laid it on very [illegible word] for me here at the embassy. We're playing a golf match today for charity, and, which is a novelty I'm sure, it's a gorgeous day. Met and supped with a great many of your friends and supporters—[illegible name], [illegible name], et al. Hope you're getting some golf in now and then—when, if ever time allows.

Bing Crosby

Stockdale was the American Ambassador in Ireland. President Kennedy stayed at Bing's Palm Desert home on several occasions and the handout includes a nice letter of thanks from JFK to Bing and Kathryn dated September 30, 1963. Bing's contacts with the Presidents of the USA continued over the years and it was planned that he would entertain at a Christmas Season Evening at the White House on December 18, 1971 but I do not believe that he actually took part. Also, in January 1976, Bing and Kathryn apparently loaned three striking Moran sculptures to President Ford for use as table centre-pieces at a State Dinner honouring the Prime Minster of Israel and Mrs. Rabin. Gerald Ford went on to play in Bing's 1977 Pebble Beach Pro-Am and again a letter regarding this was included in the National Archives package.

The last two pages of the handout are sad. The first is a letter from First Lady Rosalynn Carter dated October 12, 1977 inviting Bing to sing at a reception at the White House on December 17 and the last is a statement by President Carter dated October 14, 1977 which reads as follows:

For all the roads, he travelled in his memorable career, Bing Crosby remained a gentleman, proof that a great talent can be a good man despite the pressures of show business. He lived a life his fans around the world felt was typically American:

successful yet modest, casual but elegant. He revolutionized popular music, sang the biggest hit of all time, yet was a man who would be at ease in any American home.

President Ford at Pebble Beach, 1977.

A very interesting package from the National Archives and our thanks to Mr. Jackanicz for putting it together.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Maysville Celebrates One of Its Own

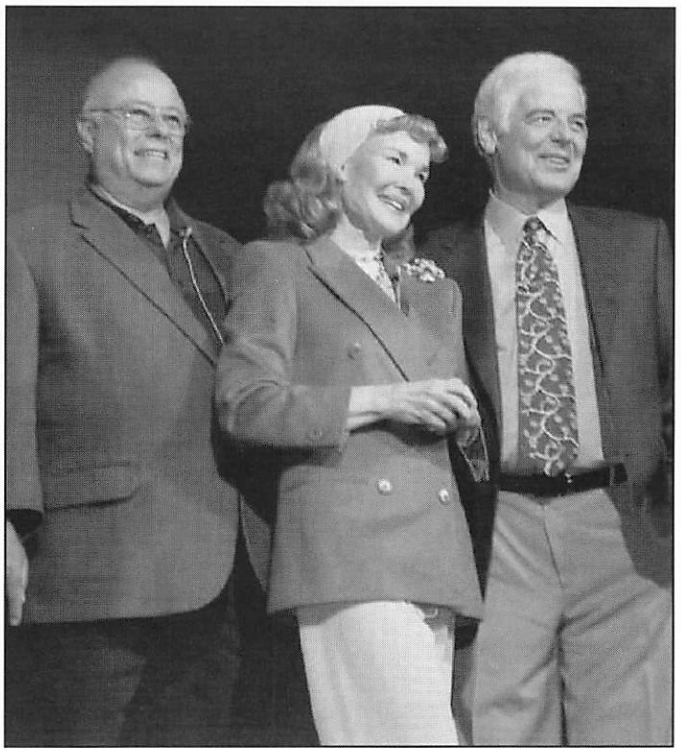
Our hard-working contributor, Greg Van Beek, explains.

Rosemary Clooney's hometown of Maysville, Kentucky should really be renamed to Clooneyville. By all accounts, everywhere you turned on the 20th September 2003 in that little town, there was someone named Clooney or someone related to a Clooney. They were all on hand to pay homage to its most revered citizen.

The occasion was the 5th annual Rosemary Clooney Music Festival, and several of the members of the International Club Crosby were in attendance or helped with various aspects of the event. Proceeds went towards the preservation and restoration of the Russell Theater, a historic theater in Maysville which, fifty years ago, was home to the world premiere of Rosemary Clooney's first motion picture, Paramount's *The Stars Are Singing*. It is hoped that once the restoration is complete, part of the theater can be used as a museum dedicated to the Clooney family.

The Rosemary Clooney Music Festival began in 1999, and featured live performances from Rosemary every year up until her death in 2002. With the support of her family, the event continues in her honor. The event has boasted such stellar performers as Michael Feinstein, Debby Boone, Former Miss America Heather Renee French, George Clooney, Miguel Ferrer, Alison Krauss, Big Kahuna and the Copa Cat Pack, The Whites, Ron Block, and the Peasall Sisters. But this year was extra special, as the event celebrated the unique friendship of the Clooney and Crosby families. Our own honorary President, Kathryn Crosby, was on hand to take part in a special presentation with Bob DeFlores and emceed by Nick Clooney, (Rosemary's brother and father of actor George Clooney) titled "The Crosby-Clooney Connection". It offered fans an opportunity to ask Mrs. Crosby about her life with Bing and her nearly 50 years of friendship with Rosemary Clooney and also, offer insight into one of the most legendary friendships in Hollywood, that of Bing & Rosemary.

International Club Crosby member Bob DeFlores was originally approached by Kathy Brown, administrator for the fabulous www.rosemaryclooney.com website, seeking rare film and television performances from Rosemary to be used during the Crosby-Clooney Connection presentation. As many of you will know, Bob began collecting and restoring films in 1953, and has amassed thousands of works since then, including rare newsreels, cartoon shorts, sports footage, full length features, as well as jazz and big band material. He is currently in the process of helping Kathryn Crosby restore Bing's personal film collection, but was working with Bing during the last few years of his life to help him complete his collection. In 1977, Bob donated the 1937 short *Swing With Bing* for a special screening at the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournament in Pebble Beach, CA. Bing had lost his copy during the 1943 fire, which claimed his house and had not seen the film in many years.



Bob DeFlores with Kathryn Crosby and Nick Clooney

Bob and I have been working together cataloging Bing's film and television collection, as our areas of interest and research complement one another, Bob with Bing's films and I with his television work. So when approached with this project, Bob immediately got in touch with me to see what television clips could be used. What Bob didn't know, is that

I'm also a big fan of Rosemary and have a substantial collection of her solo work as well. In fact, I had just located an original 35mm print of a rare 1953 Christmas Seals promotional film, during which Rosemary sings "Happy Christmas, Little Friend" accompanied by Buddy Cole. Bob was able to restore this film to its pristine luster, and it made its debut as part of the presentation in Maysville.

Bing and Rosemary count their blessings.

Between Bob, Kathy Brown, and myself, we came up with an hour and fifteen minutes of film and television excerpts, some twenty numbers, which comprised the main presentation. Bob spent six and a half hours editing everything together, a tremendous amount of work, but the fruits of his labor garnered one of the finest tributes ever paid to Rosemary on the screen.

Bing was featured in clips from *BING! A 50th Anniversary Gala* (1977), after which Mrs. Crosby explained how Bing fell from the stage following this performance and as he was being wheeled away by paramedics, waved to the audience and hummed 'da, da, da, da, da-da-da-da-da-da' (Off we go into the wild blue yonder… the Air Force song). The opening number from Bing's 1964 CBS variety special was also featured, during which Bing introduces Rosemary as being from Maysville, Kentucky, which garnered wild applause from the audience. During the introduction on this TV program, Bing uses the word "aver", to which Nick said "Bing is the only person who could get on national television, use that word, and make it work!" Mrs. Crosby went on to say about this show that rehearsals were "the easiest thing in the world for Rosemary and Bing….and the hardest thing for me." The day before the 1964 show was taped, Mrs. Crosby was doing her site nursing at the Veterans Hospital. They had a dance, and she spent the day dancing with a man who hadn't moved in seven years. They danced hopping on one foot! She went from that to dancing with Peter Gennaro, in one day's time!

Clips of Rosemary's husband Dante DiPaolo, at age 14 dancing with Bing, followed from my copy of the 1939 film *The Star Maker*. This was intended to surprise Dante, who was to be a featured guest at the event, but had to cancel after his mother suffered a fall and had to be hospitalized. Bob DeFlores mentioned that this was one of the first films he saw in a theater with his father when it was newly released.

Bob had some extremely rare footage of Rosemary and her sister Betty, which no one in the Clooney family had ever seen before! This included a rare Snader film of Betty from the early 1950's singing "Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella". Lou Snader filmed over 500 short films between 1950 and 1953 to be used as "filler" material on early television. Betty was also featured with an incredibly young brunette Rosemary in a short film with the Tony Pastor Orchestra. Kathryn Crosby appeared in a scene from *Anatomy of A Murder*, and Dante made another appearance fifteen years after his first with Bing in the musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. Rosemary also gave an elegant treatment to the title song from the film *Going My Way* from her TV show in 1956. In introducing the number "You Got Class" performed by Rosemary and Bob Hope in the 1953 film *Here Come The Girls*, Nick Clooney said Dolores Hope cited this as Bob's worst movie!

Bing and Rosemary were featured together in clips from *White Christmas* ("Count Your Blessings"), and the lengthy medley from *The Edsel Show* (1957) with Frank Sinatra. Following this clip, Bob told the story of how each of the stars of the show were given a new Edsel to drive. Rosemary's was purple in color, and she had trouble starting it. The final straw came when she grabbed the door handle to get in the car, and the handle broke off in her hand! She went to Edsel Ford and said "Mr. Ford…about your car.." before handing him the door handle! The Bing Crosby Special from 1960 ("I Want To Be Happy" medley with Johnny Mercer) came next, followed by an Armed Forces Television excerpt, also from 1960, accompanied by the Buddy Cole Trio, singing Irving Berlin's "Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better". The presentation wrapped up with Rosemary's solo followed by her "Travelling Two-Beat" medley with Bing on the *Hollywood Palace* in 1966. The final song was Rosemary paying tribute to Bing in 1981 by performing "But Beautiful". Drummer Jake Hanna was in the band that accompanied Rosemary for this performance, and they reminisced about the lengthy medley Bing did with Joe Bushkin at the Palladium. Rosemary asked Jake how long the medley lasted, to which he replied "it was so long, we were all sober by the time it was over"!

During the question and answer session, Nick Clooney asked Kathryn Crosby when she first heard his sister Rosemary sing. She replied it was at Paramount, during the filming of *White Christmas*. Nick offered an amusing story about a 1950's appearance by Rosemary on the popular Ed Sullivan TV show. While waiting her turn to perform, she was behind "Lonesome" George Gobel backstage, when she saw George take a flask out of his pocket and have a little snort of whatever alcohol was inside. He then offered Rosemary a sip, which the horrified Clooney declined. Gobel quipped "you mean you're going out there all alone?"

Mrs. Crosby mentioned how she won the title of "Miss Fatstock" at the Houston Rodeo and how this helped land her contract at Paramount Pictures. She went to the studio on a Monday, accompanied by Art Rush, who was Roy Rogers' manager—and a judge at the Miss Fatstock contest! She had a screen test that Wednesday with William Holden, and signed a seven-year contract on Friday. During her time on the lot, the future Mrs. Crosby wrote a little column for a Texas newspaper, interviewing the likes of Ray Milland, Joan Fontaine, Macdonald Carey, Arlene Dahl, and Bob Hope, before getting a chance to chat with Bing. Following their interview, Bing said "how about dinner Thursday night?", thus initiating what would eventually lead to romance.

Nick Clooney recalled a time when he was home on leave from the Army, and visited Rosemary and Jose Ferrer at their home. When he walked in, he found Bing Crosby with them! Nick took a seat, which placed him back to back with Bing. Jose, or Joe, as he was known, suddenly asked Bing if he would sing "White Christmas", which he did. Nick said he was in tears, as he could feel the deep resonance of Bing's voice permeating through the back of his chair as he sang. He turned, and found that Bing still had his pipe clenched

between his teeth as he sang!

Other topics discussed were Kathryn and Bing's children and their activities. Mrs. Crosby offered that Mary Frances was "always uncontrollable....that's why she shot JR!", referring to her role on the popular television series *Dallas*. She spoke of Bing's mother, who lived with them, and how she would only bet $2 at the horse races on the favorite to show, much to their consternation. Another revelation was the fact that Bing never cursed when he was angry. The only time he ever used a curse word was when it was funny and added to a story he was regaling!

Speaking of how protective Bing was of Rosemary, Mrs. Crosby recalled that while Rosemary was giving birth to her first child, Bing was in the same hospital with a kidney stone attack. Bing heard from one of the nurses as soon as Rosemary gave birth, and when she did, Bing sauntered down to the lobby, where Joe was impatiently waiting the news. Bing casually said "Hiya Joe, how're you doing? It's a boy. Nine pounds, two ounces"— Bing knew before Rosemary's own husband!

Following the Crosby-Clooney Connection presentation, Mrs. Crosby signed copies of her new book *My Last Years With Bing*, and took part in the festival gala banquet, where she signed yet more books! All told, as Bob DeFlores confirmed, she sold at least 100 copies! There was also a silent auction, and a concert performance from Linda Ronstadt, backed by the Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra rounded out the day. Ms. Ronstadt, incidentally, performed for free, in honor of her dear friend Rosemary, a most commendable thing.

The festival was a huge success with nearly 3000 people attending. It raised more than $20,000, of which $7000 will be used towards the restoration of the historic Russell Theater. 300 people alone attended The Crosby-Clooney Connection presentation at the Washington Opera House. Other notables in attendance included singer Debby Boone, who is Pat Boone's daughter, married to Rosemary's son Gabriel Ferrer, Rosemary's daughter Monsita and her husband, Rosemary's sister Gail and Rosemary's dear friend Blanchie Mae Chambers. Nelson Riddle's daughter, coincidentally also named Rosemary, was also in attendance, as was Rosemary's longtime arranger John Oddo and the Mayor of Maysville, David Cartmel. Tony Bennett donated a signed lithograph of one of his paintings for the silent auction, which raised $2100! The film presentation seemed to gather the most favorable response. It was a most moving tribute, so much so that Rosemary's family were in tears while watching the film excerpts. It had only been a little more than a year since the untimely passing of this great entertainer.

Bob DeFlores was most impressed with the amount of people in attendance. Even Nick Clooney remarked to him that there were more people this year than before. Fans traveled from great distances to attend, including Japan. Four young ladies drove all the way from St. Louis. Bob said it best; "The whole town supports and loves Rosemary, whether or not they're family". Next year, they hope to have Mrs. Crosby back again, as the Rosemary Clooney Music Festival celebrates the 50th anniversary of the film *White Christmas*. As Kathy Brown said "The festival would be a great meeting place for Crosby and Clooney fans alike".

In closing, I should also mention that ICC member Judy Schmid and your author helped supply rare photos of Bing and Rosemary for the souvenir program for The Crosby-Clooney Connection. Kathy Brown spent a great deal of time not only producing the program, but organizing and coordinating the entire event, and deserves a hearty round of applause by all for her tireless work.

Greg Van Beek

ON THE ROAD WITH KATHRYN, BIX AND AL

Martin McQuade reports...

August 2003, in New York City, gave credence to the notion that there is in the land a burgeoning reawakening to the myriad accomplishments of our hero, Bing. Several facets of his fabulous career were honored in our fair metropolis, and, in the process, a rather torrid month was amply ventilated by the mellifluous sounds that could only emanate from Der Bingle.

Early this summer, Paul J. Maringelli of the Bix Beiderbecke Sunnyside Memorial Committee in Queens, New York City requested that I participate in a ceremony marking the centennial of the birth of the jazz pioneer and the 71st anniversary of his death. The event took place on Saturday, August 9 at the All Saints Church located on the same street as the Art Deco apartment building (43-12 46th St., Sunnyside, Queens) where Bix lived and met his untimely end at the age of 28. The festivities included the placement of a memorial plaque in front of the legend's residence, a jazz concert by the Ray McGill quintet, statements by renowned Bix archivist Albert Haim, and a presentation by yours truly, which outlined the personal and professional relationship shared by Bix and Bing.

I selected 5 outstanding recordings on which the two incendiaries blended: "Changes", "You Took Advantage of Me", "Waiting At The End of the Road", "From Monday On", (version with Paul Whiteman orchestra) and "Oh, Miss Hannah". Woven throughout my delivery were direct statements from Bing, gathered by the noted Crosby scholar, Fred Romary, which illustrated how fondly Bing regarded his friend. The remarks reflected on several topics, including Bix's intelligence ("Bix was very intellectual, very well read, and as good an authority on new American symphonic music or classical music as anyone I've known") sleeping habits, ("Bix slept fitfully, and he liked a room equipped with twin beds, so that he could move back and forth from one to the other if he became restless") and alleged vices ("I don't think it was ever fair to call him an alcoholic because he'd go for days without touching the stuff...in the end it was his lack of sleep and his physical exhaustion which broke his health and killed him...I'll never forget how I felt when we heard that Bix had died. Everyone was crushed").

The audience was very responsive. Shortly after the tribute I received a letter from Mr. Maringelli that included the following gratifying thought: "As one attendee pointed out, not everyone knows who Bix was but everyone knows Bing. By explaining their working relationship and Bing's admiration for Bix, you helped to elevate Bix's musical status to the many who attended."

The Lincoln Center Film Society's tribute to Bob Hope at the Walter Reade theatre in New York opened the day before the Bix testimonial. Linda Hope, Bob's daughter, had been co-coordinating the retrospective with this venerable organization for quite some time, and it was envisioned as part of the Hope centennial celebration. It just so happened that the two-week survey opened ten days after the sad day of the great man's death, but in the tradition of 'the show must go on,' Linda came to town to introduce the initial screening, *Road To Singapore*. Kathryn Crosby had told me that she would be arriving in New York the very next week as a stopover prior to her son Harry's wedding in Italy. This serendipitous turn of events inspired me, with Mrs. Crosby's consent, to suggest to the society's program director that Kathryn introduce the forthcoming screening of *Road To Utopia* on August 12. The

idea excited him, and thus the scene was set for an extremely memorable and glamorous evening.

Mrs. Crosby arrived at the theatre lobby a little before 7 p.m. She was clad in a spectacular floor-length, black, beaded evening gown designed by Oleg Cassini. She was accompanied by Harry's gracious and beautiful bride, Mihaela. A large gathering of people was eagerly awaiting Kathryn and she took the time to chat with several individual fans before being ushered into the auditorium and onto the stage by officials of the film society.

After being introduced, Mrs. Crosby shared with the audience a very poignant account of the recent Bob Hope funeral mass. She described it, while stifling a sob, as the most exquisitely floral service she had ever witnessed. She injected a light note when she remarked that, although Bing met Dolores Hope before Bob did and that she met Bob before she met Bing, they had both made the right choices. She concluded by saying, "Bing and Bob were supremely capable at making us laugh so let's watch the movie." The classic produced gales of laughter and the sterling, newly restored 35mm. print reminded one and all that *Road To Utopia* is an hilarious and tuneful addition to the most antic musical series on film. After the screening, we were given a tour of an exhibition at the theatre of Hope graphics. The several original road movie posters on view lent the perfect touch to an exhilarating night.

Bing & Bob on the way to Utopia

Other Bing films shown during the week-long tribute to Bob Hope were *Road To Morocco, My Favorite Blonde, My Favorite Brunette, Son of Paleface* and *Star-Spangled Rhythm.*

I arranged later that week for Mrs. Crosby to appear at the 7th Annual Long Island Al Jolson Festival. She participated in a panel discussion, commenting on how often Bing would reminisce about seeing Jolson perform when he was a boy and how much he enjoyed working with him on the radio. Kathryn was the recipient of the majority of the questions from those present and it seemed that the audience was more interested in Bing than in Jolson. There was a genuine outpouring of affection for not only Bing, but for Kathryn as well. On August 14, I joined Kathryn for the taping of an interview for Joe Franklin's radio show (after which she was stranded in mid-town Manhattan during the blackout.) On August 19, Richard Grudens hosted a very lavish luncheon and book-signing for Mrs. Crosby at the Three Village Inn in Stonybrook, Long Island. I assisted with the details and Richard prepared, for the occasion, a delightful display of Bing movie posters and photos. There was a large turnout and everyone was moved by Kathryn's tender, a-cappella rendition of Kern and Harbach's "Yesterdays", which she announced she would perform at the Hope memorial service. Additionally, I initiated a meeting for Mrs. Crosby and myself with the curator of the Museum of Television and Radio in New York. He expressed interest in planning a Crosby television retrospective and provided a want list of programs to add to the museum's collection. Mrs. Crosby indicated she would do her best to locate the shows (see list elsewhere in this issue.)

Mrs. Crosby left the very next day for Italy. Immediately after her return, she appeared at the Hope memorial on August 27. She was featured on the Larry King Show later that night, one of several guests honoring the memory of Bob Hope. Mr. King invited Mrs. Crosby back to his program for a tribute to Bing. The show was taped in early October and Kathryn was joined by her children, Nathaniel and Mary Frances, as well as Andy Williams and Celeste Holm. She reported to me that she was very pleased by the way the show went and especially thrilled that it would be broadcast on Christmas day.

I've been busy organizing events for her in late October, among them an all-day Crosby festival at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York on October 28 and a guest appearance at the annual Old Time Radio Convention in Newark, New Jersey on October 25. These events augur very well for the Bing renaissance now under way. Kathryn Crosby is an essential catalyst for this, and I am profoundly honored to assist in this undertaking. Let's all hope that before long Bing will again be "sweeping the country."

Martin McQuade
October 22, 2003

(Editor: Well done, Martin for keeping Bing's name in the public eye. As we went to press, Martin posted an update on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum which we reproduce here.)

Mrs. Crosby gave a splendid recital at the Italian-American Forum Club hosted by Bill Fugazy, Thursday night (October 23) in Manhattan. She sang, accompanied by Dave Gross, 'Moonlight Becomes You', 'Pennies From Heaven' and 'The Second Time Around' to great acclaim and sold many books. We went to the Old Time Radio convention in Newark on October 25. She was the unqualified hit of the event and was stellar at the radio-singers' panel. She sold loads of books and there was an amount of Bing fans present. Other guests who were all delighted to be with Mrs. Crosby were Paul Petersen who remembered her from their days at Columbia Pictures, Jimmy Lydon, Betsy Palmer and Beverly Washburn, the little girl from *Here Comes the Groom.* She was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Friends of Old Time Radio. Mrs. Crosby was very pleased and looks forward to the Kingsborough event tomorrow.

Martin McQuade

(Editor: It seems that Kingsborough went well too as Carmela Amari reported to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum)

I enjoyed myself very much at the Kingsborough Event. The interview with Kathryn and Martin was excellent! Kathryn sang a few songs and made the audience sing along. She sang "Swinging on a Star", "Pennies From Heaven", "Second Time Around" and "Moonlight Becomes You". Martin McQuade did an excellent job as usual with his compilation of film clips of Kathryn and some of her special moments with Bing. Kathryn spoke to me and my dad about our recent operations and signed a few things for us. Great time had by all!

Carmela Amari

BING ON THE BOX

Bert Bishop looks at Bing on TV and radio around the world.

After the Lord Mayor's Show comes .... All UK readers will be aware of that unfinished quotation, but for those in other parts of the world please consider that the Lord Mayor's Show involves a great number of horses! The analogy being that following the remarkable response by broadcasters everywhere to Bing's Centenary, or Centennial if you prefer, it would be easy to wallow in a slough of despondency as to where we go from here. For although there has been quite a lot of Bing material broadcast subsequent to the 3rd May celebrations, the euphoria of that event inevitably overshadows what has since followed. Is the Bing scene once again going to subside to spasmodic support from specialist, regional programmes? After Riding High it's High Time we heard a lot more from Mr. Music on The Road To The Future. Come on all you broadcasters, national and international – Going My Way?

BIG PICTURE – SMALL SCREEN

Alias Jesse James	Encore's Western Channel
Alias Jesse James	Movie Channel
Alias Jesse James	Showtime
Crooner Toons	TOON
Here Comes The Groom	Cinemax
High Society	Turner Classic Movies
High Time	Fox Movie Channel
Holiday Inn	Turner Classic Movies
Just for You	Cinemax
Let's Make Love	WE & American Movie Classics
My Favorite Brunette	American Movie Classics
Pepe	STARZ
Popular Song: Soundtrack of the Century	Bravo
Road To Bali	American Movie Classics
Son of Paleface	American Movie Classics
Stagecoach	Fox Movie Channel
That's Entertainment!	Turner Classic Movies
The Bells of St. Mary's	Turner Classic Movies

In that list of screenings on the American channels it will be seen that four will have been, primarily, dedications to Bob Hope with the Jesse James romp through cowboy country featuring on no less than three networks. It's a film that I've yet to acquire on video (or DVD) so can only remember Bing's involvement in the final scene when a posse of well-known good guys pick off the baddies. "This boy needs all the help he can get" asserts our man as he blows the drift from his smoking revolver.

I was intrigued by the *Crooner Toons* animated feature on the TOON channel. I knew nothing of this, but Editor Malcolm tells me that it was a compilation including the cartoons "Bingo Crosbyana", "I Only Have Eyes For You" and "Swooner Crooner".

Along the Canadian border those lucky enough to pick up CBC and CDT were able to view three of the Road flicks in August, namely *Singapore, Morocco* and *Utopia*; all stuffed with adverts – but you can't have everything! Good to know that our international status now receives that kind of feedback. We look forward to hearing from other parts of the world, too.

Back in the 'old country' the TV channels have been a lot less forthcoming. No prizes for guessing *High Society* on TCM, but it was a racing certainty that at least a couple of Road movies would hit the screens in view of the double hundred tie-in. Thus we enjoyed *Singapore, Morocco* and *Bali*. A personal favourite among the UK offerings was *Blue Skies*. Bing's second major movie in Technicolor is packed full of Irving Berlin tunes, features Fred Astaire dancing two great solos, 'Puttin' On the Ritz' and 'Heat Wave' and has Bing singing, among many other songs, the plaintive 1921 ballad 'All By Myself' introduced by what must be one of Bing's greatest throw-away lines: "So it won't be a total loss, let's dance." The song 'Blue Skies' itself stems from late 1926 and in the 1969 Irving Berlin Songography, Bing is not mentioned at all among the many who recorded it. But as this otherwise informative book was compiled by Dave Jay, who considered Al Jolson the world's greatest entertainer and had little time for Mr. C., this omission is hardly surprising! Whilst the few films that were screened in the UK are all enjoyable, a little more lateral imagination and expansion would be welcome. One such is *The Greatest Show On Earth*, one of Cecil B. DeMille's great productions depicting the lifes, loves, triumphs and tragedies of circus life as it used to be. Sadly, circuses have become sanitized over the years and only those of us of a certain age will remember the colourful excitement of the big top of yesteryear. The connection with Bing, as most will know, is the slow panning shot across the audience in which Bing and Bob Hope, seated together, enjoy their popcorn to the delightful singing of 'Lovely Luawana Lady' by Dorothy Lamour who, as a trapeze artiste, sings, swings and sways high above the spectators. This sumptuous movie was screened on Channel Five just prior to this column going to press.

We have had, in the past, *Here Comes the Groom*, but not for some time. However, across the pond Cinemax treated their viewers to this lively romantic triangle which, rather remarkably, didn't include a principle romantic ballad. Not written for the film, though, the 1951 Academy Award winning 'In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening' was actually composed by Messrs. Mercer and Carmichael for a proposed, but abandoned, Betty Hutton film on the life of silent movie star Mabel Normand, of Mack and Mabel fame. Fred Reynolds in his lavishly detailed book *The Road To Hollywood* expands even more on some fascinating facts surrounding this remarkable number and its presentation in the film. With operatic performances from Gloria Jean, Rise Stevens and Dorothy Kirsten having already

Jane Wyman says 'yes' to Bing in Here Comes The Groom

paved the way Paramount were keen to continue the remarkable presentation of otherwise polarized musical tastes in Bing's pictures. This time around it was the very young Anna Maria Alberghetti playing the part of a blind girl in a post-war orphanage singing the tricky 'Cara Nome' to very good effect. Even in the aftermath of an apocalyptic turning point in world history and the onset of the Korean conflict Hollywood was, you see, still looking to tear at heart strings! By the inclusion of several Paramount stars, in mainly musical scenarios and with no relevance to the story-line, the first half of the film has one thinking that the Studio had a surplus of performers needing gainful employment. However, once the airborne 'Misto Cristofo Columbo' has been given the all-star treatment the simple plot is allowed to unfold. Does Bing finally 'get the girl'? Well, with less than five minutes to run and the urbane Franchot Tone actually at the altar with leading lady Jane Wyman on his arm about to say "yes" it was a close run thing but, of course, inevitable. As we have already noted even 'Fifties Hollywood was not going to let anything like reality stand in the way of 'a happy ending'.

SCENE AND HEARD (in the UK)

The Essex based 'branch' of the ICC is a pretty close knit community and there isn't much that happens on the Bing front that doesn't come to the attention of one and all. It was soon common knowledge that a poll among **Liz Mullin's** Sunday morning programme listeners gave Bing a 77% victory in a choice of romantic ballads by three different performers. His nearest rivals, one of whom was by Wet, Wet, Wet, were both damp squibs by comparison. Considering that the Crosby offering was 'Around The World', not his greatest love song by any stretch of the imagination, this was a very gratifying achievement.

While way out west, even beyond the English shores, **Judith Ley** on the Isle Of Man seems to be expanding her repertoire of records by 'The Great Bing Crosby', as she affectionately calls him. True, the offerings take no account of the sublime perfection of the 'Thirties, but regular programmes that take in the likes of 'Only Forever', 'Dearly Beloved' and from the wireless 'Would I Love You' and 'If' display Judith's penchant for musical romance.

David Lowe, of BBC R. South & West has no such

restraint on the content of his likeable show and often takes a foray into the distant past. 'Happy Feet' and 'A Ghost Of A Chance' being typical examples of his willingness to treat his listeners to both the Whiteman years and the 'Crosby cry'; his favourite being 'Down By The River'.

Also from the South & West is our Sunday Late Show host, **Chris Robinson.** Among his selections were tracks as diverse as 'On Treasure Island' and 'Pistol Packin' Mama'. Chris was among several who felt that 'On The Sunny Side Of The Street' was appropriate in our record UK summer and chose the hottest day of the year, to play 'Heat Wave'. This track was also especially selected and featured by Dave Hendrickson, as you will observe in Greg Van Beek's Stateside news later on in the column, when even as late as October, temperatures were still soaring in Wisconsin. As we all know Bing had a song for every occasion!

The gun toting quartet was again featured in **Russell Davies'** *A Celebration Of Song* when he noted that this track was the first number recorded at the conclusion of the musicians strike of 1943. Vic Schoen's lively arrangement was enough to have all the participants swinging along with unreserved gusto, which makes it even more remarkable that Bing found just enough space to come in with that famous totally ad lib line! Russell made a special mention of the BBC's Crosby Memorial Studio at Maida Vale where so many celebrated artistes, from every part of the musical spectrum, have recorded. Having been the writer for the three hour series *Bing – The Greatest Of Them All*, and regularly including the Old Groaner in his weekly programme, Russell is a one of a very small number of presenters on BBC national radio who fly the flag for Mr. Crosby and our kind of music generally.

Also in that elite group are **Desmond Carrington** and, with a more limited catchment area, **Paul Barnes.** These people are the life blood of popular music as we understand it and should be supported not only by tuning in but also by direct contact with requests and appreciative letters, emails, text messages and pigeon post if necessary! Barnsey was among the first to celebrate the life of Donald O'Connor on learning of his untimely death by playing a duet of a slightly parodied 'Small Fry' when dear old Donald guested on Bing's 30th April 1952 Chesterfield broadcast.

Nigel Ogden has a regular specialist instrument series which is never missed by our own organ enthusiast, Stan White. Stan has been able to inform Nigel, and supply material, on Buddy Cole and in particular his long association with Bing. One off-air track that I heard from the programme was 'My Blue Heaven', a song that Bing recorded twice commercially though not with Buddy Cole. Which is a pity as Cole's accompaniment always suited Der Bingle - witness the *New Tricks* and *Some Fine Old Chestnuts* albums.

The Jonzo series has been mentioned quite a few times on many of the UK programmes; thanks mainly to the generosity of Ernest Sutkowski who supplies broadcasters with copies of this series to most of our presenters. Would that many more of our members support this remarkable project which, at times, must make producer John McNicholas despair of ever finishing. John has my greatest admiration for his determination and doggedness in tracking down alternative Takes, several of which had remained unheard of until he committed them to compact disc for us all to enjoy.

Also deserving of support is Barry Whittingham whose CD catalogue embraces so much radio material as well as much of the commercial material thematically presented. And if you're looking to transfer your precious VHS films to DVD Barry is your man!

WHERE THERE'S LIFE ....

When Eltham's gift to the world of entertainment passed away shortly after a magnificent century the final reel wound to a close on several remarkable decades of international entertainment. In the eyes of the world at large Bing and Bob were inseparable. If you thought of one you would almost certainly think of the other. Bob's passing has been the predominant theme among our many presenters who have been celebrating two great lives; coupling Hope and Crosby in equal measure in their joint tribute to the masters of melody and mirth. It was fortunate that quite a number of appropriate CDs were released earlier in the year, enabling many radio programmes to draw on a wealth of material to illustrate to their listeners what a great team the Old Groaner and Ski-Nose really were. Somewhere up there in the hereafter there should be a very happy horde of angels enjoying their capers; and if one of them happens to be wearing a sarong we know exactly who it will be!

Even the slightly more sober presenters recognized both Bob's century and subsequent demise by playing comedy excerpts from many of his guest appearances on Bing's various programmes. To mention only one or two would be a slight to those others who also thought it appropriate to feature them; with one of the most frequently featured albums being the Pulse CD *The Golden Age Of Comedy*. If you haven't got it look out for it on PLS CD 627 - already noted in Ken's *Keeping Track* column.

PUT IT THERE, PAL

In this first issue since the official alliance with Club Crosby we welcome news from our friends in other parts of the world, but especially the USA whose officially recognized oldest 'fan club' title we are pleased to combine with. This must surely preserve and ensure the continuance of our support for our own belief in Bing Crosby as 'the world's greatest entertainer'. No reflection on the original holder of that title, but reflecting on Bing's amazing career, which even we need reminding of from time to time, it is a career that is highly unlikely to be ever beaten.

A posting from Greg Van Beek who supplies the host, **Dave Hendrickson**, with all of the tracks, comes news of a daily Bing Crosby feature which began on radio for the Fall Season starting September 8. Station WJUB AM1420 'The Breeze' in Plymouth, Wisconsin. The Breeze began a feature Monday through Friday called 'Bing Sings'. Each morning, at 6:40am between the weather report and the sports report, they play a different Bing Crosby recording. "I was interviewed", says Greg, "for the inaugural broadcast when they

played Bing's 1976 recording of 'There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About'." The following is a rundown of what was featured in the first month:

9/9 Ol' Man River (Buddy Cole), 9/10 Straight Down The Middle, 9/11 Swinging On A Star 9/12 Put Your Hand In The Hand of The Man 9/15 Alabamy Bound 9/16 Exactly Like You 9/17 Don't Fence Me In 9/18 When My Baby Smiles At Me 9/19 Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 9/22 What I Did For Love 9/23 Old Buttermilk Sky 9/24 High Hopes 9/25 Mountain Greenery 9/26 Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 9/29 It Had To Be You 9/30 Oh Baby Mine 10/1 Everything Is Beautiful 10/2 On A Slow Boat To China 10/3 Moonlight Becomes You 10/6 San Fernando Valley 10/7 Lazy River 10/8 Heat Wave 10/9 Nothing In Common 10/10 Hindustan 10/13 True Love 10/14 Where The Blue Of The Night (1945) 10/15 It's A Good Day

Readers will need to take note that some dates shown of American broadcasts, as above, will be in 'reverse order' to how those in the UK indicate them. With the welcome merger, this column will try to maintain an even balance in most things, with news from the States reflecting their word usage, etcetera, most of which we are all used to of course.

At which point we draw a line under events in this last issue of a momentous year which has given us the Centenary celebrations and the merger. But even with Hallo'een, Guy Fawkes Night and Thanksgiving still to come Christmas music is already being featured in the stores. I haven't actually heard 'That Song' yet; but I'm sure it won't be long!

Bert Bishop, October 2003

Bing: Going My Way

This is the title of the KSPS-TV documentary shown at Gonzaga and in the Northwest of the USA in May and which it is hoped to transmit on other PBS stations throughout the country from May 2004 onwards. Now that I have received a DVD copy of the documentary, I can review it in more depth than was possible in the report on the Gonzaga celebrations in our last issue.

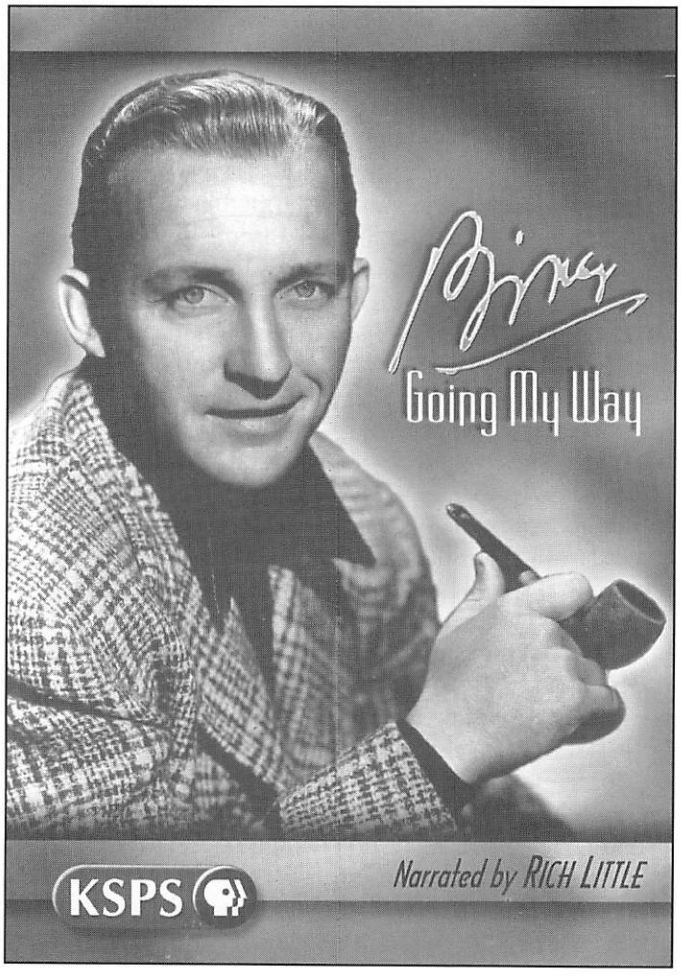
Produced by Mary DeCesare and directed by Jim Zimmer, this must be one of the best documentaries about Bing I've seen. It's certainly the most accurate. Mary and Jim had the foresight to attend the Hofstra seminar where they were able to film interviews with many of the personalities there including Kathryn Crosby, Gary Giddins, Will Friedwald, Wig Wiggins, Phoebe Jacobs (from the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation), Martin McQuade, Gord Atkinson, Nick Perito, Bob DeFlores, Ken Barnes, academic Mary Ann Scofield, Buddy Bregman, Steven Crosby, Gabriel Ferrer and even your Editor. The lighting used at Hofstra was a little harsh and made some of us look even older than we really are but no matter, we shall have to live with it! Through the connection with Gord Atkinson, the producers were able to contact Rich Little who acts as an excellent narrator throughout the programme.

Naturally as they are based in Spokane, KSPS-TV were able to draw on the resources at Gonzaga and many of the stills used and of course the Edsel footage came from that source. Our own Ron Bosley contributed a lot of photographs as well and with rare movies from Bob DeFlores plus extracts from the 1987 PBS documentary *Remembering Bing*, the production team started off with an incredibly rich resource base. And what good use they made of it!

The documentary runs for 59 minutes and breaks down into six main sections:

California: Radio: Feature Films: White Christmas: 1950s: Television

The DVD has chapters corresponding to these headings. A very strong start outlining Bing's overall achievements sets the scene nicely and a clever mixture of voice-overs, narration, Bing's singing, stills and movie images moves the programme along at a quick pace as it tells the Crosby story. An interesting flickering effect around some of the still images works well and all in all this is a very slick and well edited production.



Extracts from Gord Atkinson's *The Crosby Years* are used and we hear Bing commenting on certain aspects of his life at appropriate times. Gary Giddins is prominent throughout and what an excellent job he does in promoting Bing's attainments. The difficulties in Bing's life with his early drinking, his first marriage and his first family are not avoided and Gary Crosby's book is considered with suitable comment from Gary's son Steven.

It was good to see extracts from *Two Plus Fours*, *Confessions of a Co-Ed*, *Please* and *Take Gonzaga* as well as those films more familiar to us. Newsreel of a toupee-less Bing receiving a GI Oscar in 1945 was new to me and made fascinating viewing. The personalities

filmed at Hofstra are used frequently in the programme as are old interviews from the 1987 documentary and it was a pleasure to note Mary Martin, Donald O'Connor, Patty Andrews, Bob Hope and Jane Wyman singing Bing's praises again. Stephanie Plowman, the Gonzaga archivist, is seen to good effect too.

I was absolutely amazed at how much the production team managed to fit in and I do hope that this programme will receive extensive showings because it will do so much to sustain Bing's image.

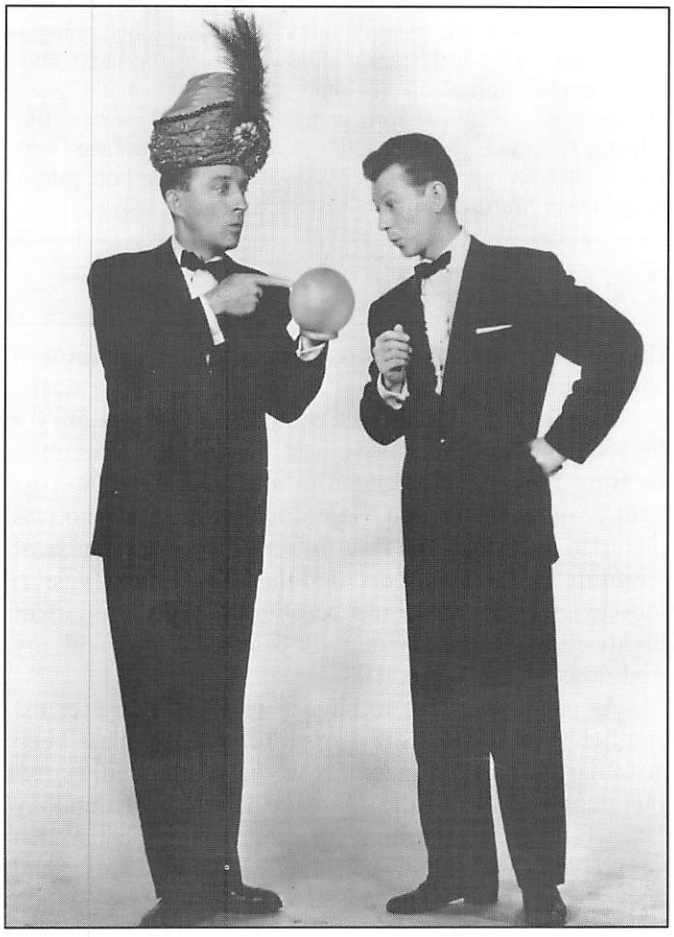
The DVD or a VHS video (NTSC only) can be obtained by making a $60 donation to KSPS-TV who are based at 3911 South Regal St., Spokane, WA 99223-7700. Phone 1-800-735-2377, web site www.ksps.org .

Malcolm Macfarlane

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Donald O'Connor, who combined comedy and acrobatics in the show-stopping "Make 'Em Laugh" number in the classic movie "Singin' in the Rain," died on September 27.



Donald O'Connor and Bing in Anything Goes

He was 78. O'Connor, who had been in declining health in recent years, died of heart failure at a retirement home in Calabasas, California. Among his other 1950s musicals were "Call Me Madam," "Anything Goes" (with Bing) and "There's No Business Like Show Business." The "Francis" comedies, which featured a bumbling O'Connor and a talking mule, began in 1949. O'Connor quit the "Francis" series in 1955, saying, "When you've made six pictures and the mule still gets more fan mail than you do ...." O'Connor also had some success in television. He won an Emmy for "The Colgate Comedy Hour" in 1954 and appeared in "The Donald O'Connor Texaco Show" from 1954 to 1955.

Born in Chicago to circus performers who went into vaudeville, O'Connor joined his family's act when he was an infant. He made his film debut at age 11 in a dancing scene with two of his brothers in *Melody for Two*. As a contract actor for Paramount, he played adolescent roles in several films, including Huckleberry Finn in *Tom Sawyer - Detective* (1938). He was Bing's kid brother in *Sing You Sinners* (1938), which he later ranked among his favourite roles. Donald O'Connor also made a couple of records with Bing on December 30, 1953, "If There's Anybody Here" and "Back In The Old Routine" and of course he sang with him on the *Anything Goes* soundtrack. He appeared with Bing on the *Kraft Music Hall* broadcast of February 3, 1944 and the *Chesterfield Show* of April 30, 1952. Donald used to play in Bing's Pebble Beach golf tournament and it was perhaps not surprising that he had some nice things to say about Bing in the 1987 PBS documentary *Remembering Bing*. There were plans for him to co-star with Bing in *White Christmas* but he had to withdraw due to a leg injury and he was replaced by Danny Kaye.

Johnny Cash, a towering figure in American music spanning country, rock and folk and known worldwide as "The Man in Black", died on September 12 in Nashville, Tennessee, aged 71. Cash, who died from diabetes complications, had battled a disease of the nervous system, autonomic neuropathy, and pneumonia in recent years. Dozens of hit records such as 'Folsom Prison Blues', 'I Walk the Line' and 'Sunday Morning Coming Down' defined Cash's persona: a haunted, dignified, resilient spokesman for the working man and downtrodden. His deeply lined face fitted well with his unsteady voice, which was limited in range but used to great effect to sing about prisoners, heartaches, and tales of everyday life. He recorded theme albums celebrating the railroads and the old west, and decrying the mistreatment of American Indians. Two of his most popular albums were recorded live at jails. Because of his frequent prison performances and rowdy early lifestyle, many people wrongly thought he had served time in jail. He never did, although he battled addictions to pills on and off throughout his life.

Cash was born on February 26, 1932, in Kingsland, Arkansas, one of seven children in a dirt-poor family. When he was 12, his 14-year-old brother and hero, Jack, died after an accident while sawing oak trees into fence posts. The tragedy had a lasting impact on Cash, and he later pointed to it as a possible reason his music was often melancholy. He learned guitar while serving with the air force in Germany. After his 1954 discharge he performed on radio station KWEM in Memphis, then auditioned with Sun Records, which launched the careers of Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison and Jerry Lee Lewis. The result was the single 'Hey Porter', which became a hit. 'Folsom Prison Blues' went to No 4 on the country charts in 1956 and featured his most famous couplet: "I shot a man in Reno/ just to watch him die." He won 11 Grammys - most recently in 2003, when 'Give My Love To Rose' earned him honours as best male country vocal performance. He was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1980 and inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992. He appears to have worked with Bing only once and that was at the Eisenhower Medical Centre benefit at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York on January 27, 1970.

Buddy Ebsen, the loose-limbed Broadway dancer who achieved stardom and riches in the television series *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Barnaby Jones*, died at the age of 95 on July 6. Ebsen, who was 6 feet 3, started out in show business as a member of the chorus in the 1928 *Whoopee*, starring Eddie Cantor. The dancer later sent for his sister Vilma and they formed a dancing team that played vaudeville, supper clubs and shows such as "Flying Colors" and "Ziegfeld Follies." They danced in many Broadway shows and MGM musicals of the 1930s. When she retired, Ebsen continued on his own, dancing with Shirley Temple (in *Captain January*) and turning dramatic actor. Except for an allergy to aluminium paint, he would have been one of the Yellow Brick Road quartet in *The Wizard of Oz*. After ten days of filming, Ebsen, playing 'the Tin Man', fell ill because of the aluminium makeup on his skin and was replaced by Jack Haley.

Television brought Ebsen's amiable personality to the home screen, first as Fess Parker's sidekick in *Davy Crockett*. then as Jed Clampett, the easygoing head of a newly rich Ozark family plunked down in snooty Beverly Hills, Ebsen became a national favourite. While scorned by most critics, *The Beverly Hillbillies* attracted as many as 60 million viewers on CBS between 1962 and 1971. Ebsen returned to series TV in 1973 as Barnaby Jones, a private investigator forced out of retirement to solve the murder of his son Hal, who had taken over the business.

Buddy Ebsen appeared on Bing's TV special of November 7, 1963 when they sang "In The Summertime" and "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" together.

Buddy Ebsen with Caterina Valente and Bing on the 1963 special

Floyd Tillman, an influential country singer, guitarist and songwriter died in August at his home near Houston at age 88. He wrote Bing's 1941 hit "It Makes No Difference Now," recorded his first No. 1 country hit in 1944 with "They Took the Stars Out of Heaven" and was one of country music's first great electric guitarists. He will probably be best remembered for a 1949 song that helped usher in the social realism era of country songwriting. "Slippin' Around" may not have been the first "cheating song," but it may have been the first one to top the charts with both Margaret Whiting and Jimmy Wakely having No. 1 hits with it. Tillman influenced many young rock 'n' rollers such as Buddy Holly and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1984.

Gisele MacKenzie, the Canadian singing star of the 1950's television show "Your Hit Parade", died on September 5 in Burbank, Calif. She was 76. Although known mainly for her contralto voice, she also traded barbs and violin riffs with Jack Benny and played the piano on her own variety show. After studying violin in her teens, she began singing and playing popular songs on the piano after school. Ms. MacKenzie wavered between a career as a singer or one as a concert violinist until her $3,000 violin was stolen from a parked car. Her vocation thus resolved, she began singing on a Canadian radio show called "Meet Gisele" in 1946, her popularity earning her the informal title of Canada's first lady of song. She sang for two years on Bob Crosby's radio show "Club 15," and when it went off the air, she joined Jack Benny on tour before winning a spot on "Your Hit Parade".

In conjunction with Buddy Cole's Orchestra, she enjoyed several minor hits in 1952 including a version of 'Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes' which reached No. 11 in the charts that year. She appeared on "Your Hit Parade" from 1953 to 1957, then left to star in her own variety series, "The Gisele MacKenzie Show," which lasted only six months. In 1963 she was on weekly television again, becoming a regular on "The Sid Caesar Show." Over the next four decades, she starred in regional theater and made guest appearances on television game shows and series like "MacGyver" and "Murder, She Wrote." Her contacts with Bing were few, but on March 19, 1959 they were both guests on the Dean Martin Show on NBC-TV.

LEEDS 2003

Michael Winspear sends us his report on the annual celebration in the UK.

We met at Leeds at three o'clock on October 5th for the 38th annual dinner organised by Michael Crampton for Bing fans. As I had been in attendance for the past eight years, it seems that Malcolm Macfarlane, who was unable to attend for the first time in 24 years because of commitments in Spain, decided that I, with my ('vast'?) knowledge of Bing, would be able to write a report of the meeting! I hope you will bear with me and my ramblings on the subject!!!

As usual, we were to have a wonderful day for the weather - wall to wall sunshine, which has been customary for all the meetings we have attended. Forty-four people came to the Mansion House in Roundhay Park - forty-three of whom stayed after the meal. When we arrived, we found that the Mansion House had changed hands since last year. The L-shaped room which we use had been re-organised. For those who have been to the Mansion House before, instead of having the dinner over the dance floor, the chairs and screen were in that situation, while the dining tables were in the bar end. This gave a much more spacious feeling to the room. Unfortunately no one manned the bar which was a little inconvenient to those wanting a drink!

Michael gave us his inimitable welcome, stating that we should be grateful for the 'team' which does so much to keep the society in business and also makes such a brilliant job of producing the magazine. This, together with thanks to the team, was greeted with much appreciative applause. Thanks were also offered to Trevor Wagstaff, Bert Bishop, Bill and Gordon Wesley for their efforts in London with the exhibition at the Barbican.

The question was asked if we wanted to continue the meetings, as in two years' time we would be celebrating 40 years of the Leeds meetings. The consensus was that we certainly wanted to continue. There were reports that a few members had not been able to attend for various reasons and Michael passed on their apologies. Jim Reilly is all right, but is unable to travel and sends his regards. He is still holding his end up with his radio programmes in Southampton and the surrounding area. George O'Reilly was mentioned as being a lot better than he has been lately. We were sorry that they were unable to attend. Shaun Crampton was responsible once again for the menus and tickets and setting up the computers for the Club, but was unable to attend because he had started his BA course at Cambridge. Our thanks to Shaun for his efforts and we wish him well at university. First time members to the meeting were Ernie Dolman, Fred and Doreen Hubbard plus Peter and Margaret Rossiter.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Joyce Edwards eight weeks ago, but Roy, her husband, made a point of coming - a very courageous decision. Bob Hope was also remembered with Joyce in the traditional silence for those no longer with us.

The meeting continued with the showing of the marvellous KSPS-TV DVD *Bing: Going My Way* which our Editor has reviewed elsewhere in this issue. We were all delighted by this as demonstrated by the spontaneous round of applause at its conclusion. This took us up to the time for dinner. As usual, Bing's voice entertained us throughout the meal, with songs from various CDs, many of which were known and sung to, at times with great gusto! The dinner - I won't repeat the menu - was swallowed with gusto and digested at ease! The new management continues the tradition of excellent food and service at the Mansion House.

After dinner we were 'entertained' by Arnold Pope's quiz - I must admit that the only way I could have won this item was to have the answers directly from Arnold, but he was not to be persuaded to give them to me! However, Bert Bishop won the first prize with eight correct answers - I only made a correct guess of four out of the ten questions! The questions follow and the answers can be found after the *Keeping Track* section of the magazine.

1. Name the film from which "Sweet Potato Piper" comes.
2. Medley of 3: What have these three numbers in common?
   a) "When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby
   b) "Did Your Mother Come From Ireland?"
   c) "Mother Darlin'"
3. Name the female singer who introduced "Love Is All" in a film
4. Name the year "Trade Winds" and "The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair" were recorded.
5. How many years separate the two versions of "It Must Be True"? 10, 9 or 8?
6. Name the backing group on the 1950 recording of "It's A Marshmallow World". Was it:
   a) The Lee Gordon Singers
   b) The Aristokats
   c) The Rhythmaires
7. Medley of 3. What have these three numbers in common?
   a) "Rhythm On The River"
   b) "Blue Skies"
   c) "East Side Of Heaven"
8. Name the accompanying orchestra to the 1932 recording of "Let's Try Again". Was it that of:
   a) Benny Kreuger
   b) Isham Jones
   c) Jimmy Grier
9. Medley of 3: which is the earliest recording?
   a) "I'll Be Seeing You"
   b) "You Belong To My Heart"
   c) "I'd Love To Live In Loveland"
10. Name the source from which this recording of "Across The Wide Missouri' / 'Shenandoah" is taken. Was it:
   a) a radio show
   b) a TV show
   c) a commercial recording

The only fly in the ointment was that we only heard the songs and had to recognise the titles - for most of us, that was no problem!

We moved on to a fascinating video, which had kindly been supplied by Gord Atkinson, of the 1981 dedication of the bronze statue of Bing on the Gonzaga campus. Kathryn Crosby attended the outdoor ceremony and Gord Atkinson, Rich Little, Jimmy Van Heusen, Phil Harris and others made amusing speeches prior to the unveiling of the statue. The major problem for the University is keeping the pipe in situ with the statue of Bing. The students will persist in acquiring it!

We were then entertained by Ole Meistrop's video recording of the visit to Gonzaga University, Spokane, in May to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Bing's birth. As reported in the last issue of *BING*, several UK members of the ICC went to America for the three-day conference, where Malcolm Macfarlane and others, including Frank Sinatra's son and Rich Little, made speeches at the banquet. This was very interesting but unfortunately time did not allow us to see all of it. There was a mention that all through the campus, wherever you went, Bing's music was being played.

The evening concluded with one of Jim Reilly's compilations of snippets of Bing's films and songs, including some previously unseen (by me) rehearsal shots. We said our usual goodbyes and left Michael and Judith clearing up - with the help of a few members, in order to wend our several ways home, having had an interesting and varied day.

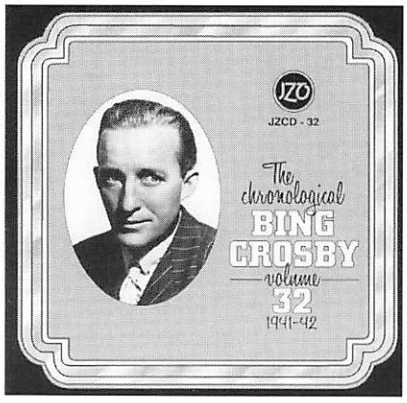
Michael Winspear

Keeping Track

COMPACT DISCS

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 32 JZCD 32 £10.55 UK
1 Shepherd Serenade* 2 Do You Care?* 3 I Want My Mama 4 Deep In The Heart Of Texas 5 I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes 6 Sing Me A Song Of The Islands 7 I'm Drifting Back To Dreamland* 8 The Singing Sands Of Alamosa 9 Remember Hawaii 10 Miss You 11 Mandy is Two* (A take) 12 Mandy Is Two* (B take) 13 Angels Of Mercy (test) 14 Skylark* (A take) 15 Skylark (B take) 16 Nobody's Darlin' But Mine 17 When The White Azaleas Start Blooming* 18 The Lamplighter's Serenade 19 Blue Shadows And White Gardenias 20 Blues In The Night* 21 Moonlight Cocktail* 22 I Don't Want To Walk Without You 23 Lily Of Laguna (with Mary Martin) 24 Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie (with Mary Martin)
* = new to CD

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 33 JZCD 33 £10.55 UK
1 Got The Moon In My Pocket 2 Just Plain Lonesome* 3 The Waltz Of Memory* 4 Lazy 5 Let's Start The New Year Right (A take) 6 Let's Start The New Year Right (B take) 7 I've Got Plenty To Be Thankful For 8 I'll Capture Your Heart (with Fred Astaire) 9 When My Dreamboat Comes Home 10 Walking The Floor Over You 11 White Christmas (A take) 12 White Christmas (B take) 13 Abraham 14 Song Of Freedom 15 The Bombardier Song 16 Easter Parade 17 Happy Holiday 18 Be Careful Its My Heart 19 Adeste Fideles 20 Silent Night 21 Faith Of Our Fathers 22 God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 23 Conchita Marquita Lolita Pepita Rosita Juanita Lopez* 24 Road To Morocco (A take) 25 Road To Morocco (B take)* 26 Ain't Got A Dime To My Name
* = new to CD



I don't know about you, but for me there is no more welcome sight than the postcard that periodically drops through the letter box announcing the latest in the Chronological series. These two latest releases take us further into Bing's heartland years of the 1940s. This passage of time presents a challenge for John McNicholas in that increasingly, the titles the chronology forces him to offer are those that turn up on other cheap budget labels, often mastered from inferior LP sources. The Chronological series gives you the authentic Bing - mastered from the best 78s available, and whilst that always brings some hiss, it's minimal and what's behind it is the pure, unadulterated Crosby voice. And of course, any single release is almost bound to include several rare takes and test pressings that few of us possess. So, keep 'em coming Jonzo and I hope that we will all keep on buying.

Jonzo albums 32 and 33 are only obtainable in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD, UK. Price £10.70 each postpaid (or both for £21.10). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records.

Bing Crosby Chronology Redmond Nostalgia $8.95 USA
For anyone who wants an alternative to the Jonzo series, check out Redmond Nostalgia. As the name implies, this is an "old music" label that puts out both commercial and radio material. Pete Cakanic tells me that their "alternative" chronology series is up to 1946. Issues have more of a utility feel to them than the Jonzo releases, with no sleeve notes and perhaps an alternate take or two lighter, but worth a look. Redmond offer discounts for bulk purchase. Members can find them at Redmond Nostalgia, PO Box 82, Redmond, WA 98073-0082, USA. Phone is (425) 774 1819, fax (425) 774 8076 and email Redmondnostalgia@aol.com

Forever Bing Decca 9811816 £13.99 UK
Disc One
1. The Very Thought Of You 2. Cheek To Cheek 3. Have You Met Miss Jones? 4. They All Laughed 5. Don't Fence Me In (with The Andrews Sisters) 6. A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square 7. Anything You Can Do (with Dick Haymes and The Andrews Sisters) 8. Stars Fell On Alabama* 9. You Are My Sunshine 10. Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 11. No Other Love 12. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 13. Where The Blue Of The Night 14. Once In A While 15. Spanish Eyes* 16. Now Is The Hour 17. Moonlight Becomes You 18. Feels Good, Feels Right 19. Dear Hearts And Gentle People 20. I Can't Begin To Tell You 21. I'm An Old Cowhand 22. Pistol Packin' Mama (with The Andrews Sisters) 23. Seasons* 24. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 25. Silent Night
Disc Two
1. White Christmas 2. Swinging On A Star 3. As Time Goes By 4. People Will Say We're In Love (with Trudy Erwin) 5. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 6. Pennies From Heaven 7. Ol' Man River 8. Nice Work If You Can Get It 9. Stardust 10. Jeepers Creepers 11. Embraceable You 12. There's Nothing I Haven't Sung About 13. A Weaver Of Dreams 14. Careless Hands 15. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby 16. Nevertheless 17. McNamara's Band 18. In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening (with Jane Wyman) 19. Galway Bay 20. Among My Souvenirs 21. I'll See You In My Dreams 22. I've Never Been In Love Before 23. Time On My Hands 24. Sioux City Sue 25. Peace On Earth / Little Drummer Boy (with David Bowie)
*=*new to CD*
This new 2-CD set was announced as we went to press and we have not had the opportunity of hearing it. It appears to be an

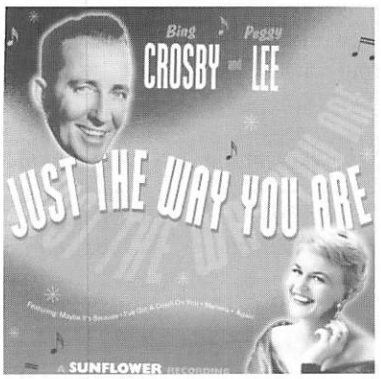
unusual mixture of tracks including songs from the Bing & Bregman album and the LPs Bing made for Decca in the 1970s. How nice to see 'Seasons' on CD for the first time. I'm not sure how the mono tracks featuring Bing's voice of the 1940s will mix with the mid-seventies Crosby tones in stereo but it's a fascinating issue nevertheless.

From a new UK based outlet, Sunflower Records, we have three new issues, two of which feature Bing in a series of duets with Peggy Lee

Bing Crosby & Friends - Swinging On A Star SUN 2085 £5 UK
1 Swinging On A Star 2 The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid (with Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden) 3 Humpty Dumpty Heart 4 Golden Earrings 5 But Beautiful 6 San Fernando Valley 7 Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) 8 Sunday Monday Or Always 9 Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (with the Andrews Sisters) 10 Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (My Baby)? (with the Andrews Sisters) 11 When My Dreamboat Comes Home 12 I'll Be Seeing You 13 Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters) 14 Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 15 I'd Know You Anywhere 16 Careless Hands 17 Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy 18 Have I Told You Lately That I Love You? (with the Andrews Sisters) 19 Mule Train 20 Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby)

Bing Crosby & Peggy Lee - El Rancho Grande SUN 2108 £5 U K
1 It Takes A Long, Long Train (With A Red Caboose) (Peggy Lee - solo) 2 El Rancho Grande 3 Just An Old Love Of Mine (Peggy Lee - solo) 4 Love, Your Magic Spell Is Everywhere (Peggy Lee - solo) 5 You Came A Long Way From St Louis 6 What Is This Thing Called Love? (Peggy Lee - solo) 7 Exactly Like You 8 They Can't Take That Away From Me 9 On A Slow Boat To China 10 A Little Bird Told Me 11 Then I'll Be Happy (listed as 'I Want To Go Where You Go') 12 Cuanto Le Gusta 13 I Got Lucky In The Rain (Peggy Lee - solo) 14 Maybe You'll Be There 15 Trouble Is A Man (Peggy Lee - solo) 16 So In Love 17 When A Man Is A Man 18 When Is Sometime? (Peggy Lee - solo) 19 Once And For Always 20 Easter Parade 21 Be-Bop Spoken Here 22 How It Lies, How It Lies, How It Lies 23 Bali Ha'i (Peggy Lee - solo)

Bing Crosby & Peggy Lee - Just The Way You Are SUN 2110 £5 UK
1 Louisa From Lake Louise (Peggy Lee - solo) 2 Maybe It's Because 3 You're In Love With Someone 4 I'm In Love With A Wonderful Guy (Peggy Lee - solo) 5 I've Got A Crush On You 6 Again 7 I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues (Peggy Lee - solo) 8 A Thousand Violins 9 Way Back Home 10 Stay Well 11 Manana 12 Little Jack Frost Get Lost 14 When You Speak With Your Eyes (Peggy Lee - solo) 15 Sunshine Cake 16 I'm Coming Virginia (Peggy Lee - solo) 17 A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes (Peggy Lee - solo) 18 A Bushel And A Peck 19 Orange Coloured Sky (Peggy Lee - solo) 20 Just The Way You Are 21 Would I Love You? (Peggy Lee - solo)



These three CDs represent excellent value for money, especially when Sunflower's parent, Great Music, offer a package of all three for £10. The two CDs with Peggy Lee are especially interesting. They pull together radio duets between Bing and Peggy from both Philco and Chesterfield sources. There is some duplication of the Philco tracks with the Avid CD of a few years back, but much of what's here is, as far as I can tell, new to CD. There are no sleeve notes or details of sources but sound quality is excellent. The non-Bing tracks are Peggy Lee solos, which seem again to be drawn from her spots on Bing's radio show. The "Bing & Friends" CD is a pleasant 20-tracker, with one or two less common items, the only drawback being that some of the tracks are mastered from LP source with that dreadful 1970s echo added.

Bert Bishop took time out from keeping a watch on radio and TV to alert us to the following new issue.

Bing Crosby with Gary Crosby & The Andrews Sisters Starlite CDS 51058 UK
1 Where The Blue Of The Night (1945) 2 Play A Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby) 3 Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) 4 On The Atchison, Topeka And The Santa Fe 5. I'll Be Seeing You 6 In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening (with Jane Wyman) 7 Amor 8 Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters) 9 Swinging On A Star 10 San Fernando Valley 11 Galway Bay 12 Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) 13 Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 14 Deep In The Heart Of Texas
No details of price or quality to hand, but I would guess it's a budget release. All titles are very common CD releases.

News next via our editor of two comprehensive CD compilations from the Land of Oz.

Bing Crosby Movies & Songs Rajon CDR0051 AU$19.99 Australia
Disc 1: 1. Mississippi Mud / I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain (Rhythm Boys) 2. Where the Blue of the Night (1931 - B take) 3. Please (1932) 4. Down the Old Ox Road 5. Thanks 6. The Day You Came Along 7. Going Hollywood / Temptation (from film soundtrack) 8. We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines 9. Love Thy Neighbour (1934) 10. June In January 11. Love Is Just Around The Corner 12. Swanee River (Old Folks At Home) 13. It's Easy To Remember 14. My Heart And I 15. I'm An Old Cowhand 16. Pennies From Heaven 17. One, Two Button Your Shoe 18. Sweet Leilani 19. I've Got A Pocketful of Dreams 20. Small Fry (with Johnny Mercer) 21. Sing A Song of Sunbeams 22. Hang Your Heart On A Hickory Limb 23. In My Merry Oldsmobile 24. An Apple for the Teacher (with Connie Boswell) 25. Sweet Potato Piper

Disc 2: 1. Rhythm on the River 2. Only Forever 3. You Lucky People You 4. Birth Of The Blues 5. By The Light Of The Silvery Moon 6. The Waiter, The Porter And The Upstairs Maid (with Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden) 7. White Christmas (1947) 8. Happy Holiday 9. Easter Parade 10. Ain't Got A Dime To My Name 11. Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 12. Moonlight Becomes You 13. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot 14. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (1945) 15. Swinging On A Star 16. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (with the Andrews Sisters) 17. The Bells of St. Mary's 18. Put It There Pal (with Bob Hope) 19.

A Couple of Song and Dance Men (with Fred Astaire) 20. Blue Skies 21. You Don't Have to Know the Language (with the Andrews Sisters) 22. If You Stub Your Toe on the Moon 23. When Irish Eyes Are Smiling 24. Sunshine Cake (with Carole Richards) 25. The Horse Told Me 26. Accidents Will Happen (solo version)*
* = new to CD

Here's what Malcolm has to say about the set.
"An interesting selection of Bing's commercial recordings of his film songs which also includes a couple of soundtrack versions from 'Going Hollywood'. I understand that David Currington had some input into this set and it shows as we have a few songs such as "My Heart & I" and "Accidents Will Happen" which don't turn up very often. Short sleeve notes are followed by the ICC logo but surprisingly no contact details are given. Quality is good throughout with only slight surface noise discernible on the earlier tracks. Tracks 3 and 24 on Disc 1 seemed to have some reverberation or echo added. Rajon are to be congratulated on putting out this attractive package in Australia. I obtained my copy by ordering it direct from HMV Australia (http://www.hmv.com.au/v4/home/welcome.asp)."

The Great Bing Crosby - Vol 2 Rajon CDR0046 AU$19.99 Australia
Disc 1: 1. I'm Coming Virginia (with Al Rinker) 2. Muddy Water 3. Mississippi Mud (W400034-A) 4. Make Believe 5. Lovable 6. Just A Gigolo 7. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (1931) 8. I Found A Million Dollar Baby (1931) 9. Gems From "George White's Scandals" (Intro: This is the Missus; The Thrill is Gone; My Song; That's Love; That's Why Darkies Were Born; Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries - with Connie Boswell, Boswell Sisters, Mills Bros, Frank Munn) 10. Paradise 11. Shine (with Mills Bros) 12. St. Louis Blues (A take) 13. My Woman 14. Shadow Waltz 15. Stay On The Right Side Of The Road 16. Learn To Croon (B779-A) 17. The Day You Came Along 18. a) Going Hollywood b) Temptation (both from film sound track) 19. Love In Bloom 20. June In January 21. Red Sails In The Sunset 22. On Treasure Island 23. For Love Alone (I Have So Little To Give)
Disc 2: 1. South Sea Island Magic 2. Bob White (Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight) (with Connie Boswell) 3. Alexander's Ragtime Band (1938 - with Connie Boswell) 4. Road To Morocco (solo) 5. Mr Gallagher and Mr Shean (with Johnny Mercer - A take) 6. Mexicali Rose 7. Just A Kid Named Joe 8. Little Sir Echo 9. You Made Me Love You (with Merry Macs) 10. Sierra Sue 11. Dolores (with Merry Macs) 12. Birth Of The Blues 13. A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square 14. One Sweet Letter From You * 15. I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes 16. Deep In The Heart Of Texas 17. Blues In The Night 18. Sunday, Monday or Always 19. San Fernando Valley 20. Let Me Call You Sweetheart (1944) 21. Baby Won't You Please Come Home? 22. I Love You (Porter) 23. Ol' Man River (1945) * 24. Who's Sorry Now? 25. (Get Your Kicks On) Route 66 (with Andrews Sisters) 26. I Got Rhythm (with Peggy Lee - Philco, November 10, 1948)
Disc 3: 1. McNamara's Band 2. Sioux City Sue 3. Feudin' And Fightin' * 4. Lilli Marlene * 5. Silver Threads Among The Gold * 6. Far Away Places 7. Galway Bay 8. Careless Hands 9. All My Love 10. I Cross My Fingers * 11. When You And I Were Young Maggie Blues (with Gary Crosby) 12. It Had To Be You 13. Misto Cristofo Columbo (with Jane Wyman) * 14. Isle Of Innisfree 15. Sailing Down The Chesapeake Bay 16. Nobody's Sweetheart 17. I Might Be Your Once-In-A-While * 18. Hush-A-Bye * 19. The Small One - A Christmas Story 20. The Happy Prince - An Oscar Wilde Fairytale*
* = new to CD
This is a superb set, again with input from David Currington. Many tracks new to CD reflect the thought that has gone into the compilation. Good quality throughout the selection which is subtitled "Special Centenary Edition". Nicely packaged with the ICC logo embossed in gold on the spine. The sleeve notes consist of only 5 lines on the outside cover of the box but frankly this does not matter for this very competitively priced package. Order it while you still can. HMV Australia is the best source (http://www.hmv.com.au/v4/home/welcome.asp)

And staying in the Far East, from Japan we have the following, copies of which can be obtained via Amazon.com in the USA

The Bing Crosby Story: 2003 Edition Sony B00008PT64 $37.99 Japan
1 Mississippi Mud 2 Get Out And Get Under The Moon 3 Louise 4 I Kiss Your Hand Madame 5 Please 6 A Ghost Of A Chance 7 Brother Can You Spare A Dime? 8 You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me 9 Home On The Range 10 Temptation 11 Dinah 12 Shine 13 Sweet Georgia Brown 14 Some Of These Days 15 How Deep Is The Ocean? 16 I've Got The World On A String 17 My Honey's Lovin' Arms 18 Blue Prelude 19 St Louis Blues (take A) 20 St Louis Blues (take B) 21 Straight Down The Middle 22 Say One For Me 23 The Secret Of Christmas

This wouldn't be our winter issue without news of some tinsel touched releases and here's the latest exercise in recycled reindeer from MCA.

The Best of Bing Crosby: Christmas Collection: 20th Century Masters MCA 000038702 $12.99 USA
1 Its Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas 2 Adeste Fideles 3 God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 4 Santa Claus Is Coming To Town (with The Andrews Sisters) 5 That Christmas Feeling 6 Christmas Carols - Deck The Halls/I Saw Three Ships/Away in a Manger 7 Jingle Bells (with The Andrews Sisters) 8 Silent Night 9 The First Noel 10 I'll Be Home For Christmas 12 Here Comes Santa Claus (with The Andrews Sisters) 13 The Christmas Song
Copies of this disc were not to hand at the time of writing, and whilst the listing on the Tower Records web site shows the disc as "stereo", let's hope that is an error rather than a retrenchment to those awful days of "rechannelled stereo" that made any singer sound as though the recording had been made under water in a telephone booth. One has to feel a degree of sympathy for MCA when it comes to Christmas issues because, short of raiding the radio tapes, there is nothing they can do to top their complete Crosby at Christmas double that came out a year or two back. If one wanted to jib however, thirteen tracks for $12 or so doesn't sound like great value for money.

Sharing The Holidays With Bing Crosby Alliance Ent Special $4.99 USA
1 White Christmas 2 Happy Holiday 3 Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! 4 Good King Wenceslas 5 Silent Night 6 Silver

Bells 7 Adeste Fideles (O Come All Ye Faithful) 8 Santa Claus Is Coming to Town 9 God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 10 Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer 11 Jingle Bells 12 'Round and 'Round the Christmas Tree

This one seems to emanate from last year, although it slipped through our net. Very much a budget issue, best source of this is http://www.artistdirect.com/store/artist/album/0,,1767830,00.html who offer it at $4.99. All routine tracks except for the last one, which comes from the Daybreak "A Time To Be Jolly" album from the early Seventies.

Guest appearances and others

To close out the CD section for this issue, here are a couple of non-Bing CDs that you might like to look out for.

Tony Bennett Collection **Sony CK 89293** **$11.99** **USA**

I Love You Samantha, plus 15 other tracks by other artistes.

We wouldn't normally feature a compilation CD with just one Bing track, but this one, which Bob Achorn mentioned in his letter in our last issue, warrants an exception. Produced by Sony/Columbia in the USA and marketed via Starbuck's Coffee outlets, this is one of several CDs where well-known music figures choose their favourite titles. Mr Bennett is without doubt the last in line of the great crooners and his pedigree is immaculate. He is an avowed disciple of Sinatra of course, both in style and in days gone by, lifestyle, so it was a pleasant surprise to discover that Bing's 1956 song from "High Society" is "the best performance ever done by a popular singer." High praise indeed. In the booklet that accompanies the disc, Tony restates a point that he made a year or two back in his autobiography about Bing's popularity in the early Thirties, but even more fulsomely. "If you had the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Madonna and Elton John and put them all together, they still wouldn't be as big as Bing Crosby was on his own." All of which just it makes it strange that Tony never even tips his hat to Bing during his concert performances. I saw him in a truly excellent performance in Birmingham in the summer, full of references to Sinatra, Fred Astaire, Billie Holiday but no Bing - not even around Tony's marvellous rendition of "But Beautiful". Strange.

Phil Silvers **Emi Gold 5905052** **£6.99** **UK**

This compilation of Phil Silvers' pre-Bilko identity includes several comedy features between Silvers and other 1940s stars, including two tracks with Bing - "Coaching Bing To Be Popular" and "Child Psychology". Copy not to hand at the time of writing, so I cannot comment on quality or source, although they may be from one of the four appearances that Silvers made on KMH in 1943.

DVD AND VIDEO

Happy Holidays With Bing & Frank **HSV000032D** **$19.95** **USA**

This is the long awaited colour copy of the 1957 Christmas special teaming Bing with Frank Sinatra which was originally shown in monochrome. Copies of the original show in audio form have been around for a long time, but to everyone's great surprise and delight, the Sinatra family discovered a colour film of the special and that's what we have here. This was a Sinatra TV show with Bing as guest, although for the two giants of popular singing, it's all a bit tame really. But that said, one you definitely should have in your collection, if only to witness the awe of Bing that Sinatra clearly displays! Extras include a behind the scenes photo gallery, a Q&A session with Tina and Nancy Sinatra and the show's producer William Self, in addition to a rare 1972 television Public Service Announcement spot from Bing (in colour on the golf course) for the arthritis foundation. There are also a few other PSA's from Frank.

Copies available from the usual sources. Members would be well advised to check out www.deepdiscount.com who have been offering the set at $10.95, against a list price of $19.95, and that with free US shipping and only an extra $5 for winging the disc across the Atlantic. The show is also available on VHS video (NTSC format).

The Road Collection **Universal 8212005** **£34.99** **UK/Australia**

Anyone with internet access will doubtless know that the outbreak of "Road" films on DVD continues a pace, with umpteen different versions of these seven films now available. We reported last time too that the first four Roads - Singapore, Zanzibar, Morocco and Utopia - were available in a "Road" collection.

This 4-DVD release, compiled by Ken Barnes for Universal, is says Ken "different to the one in the States in that it will preserve the image of the original films and not be presented as a Bob Hope tribute." Perhaps of greater interest in terms of differentiation are the extras that Ken has unearthed and which are included in the set. These include the original theatre trailers, a photo gallery section, the "Hollywood Victory Caravan" plus Bing at the Stage Door Canteen in 1944. Anyone who had the privilege of attending Bing's first London Palladium season in 1976 will remember that this latter footage was used to open the show, it being Bing's last live appearance in London prior to those halcyon days of the mid-Seventies.

UK release was due on 3 November 2003.

The Best Of The Dean Martin Variety Show **$19.95** **USA**

The Dean Martin Show (not sure where the "Variety" bit has come from) was one of the top American TV shows from 1964-73. The show's producer, Greg Garrison, has launched this subscription DVD series that starts with a "Special Edition" DVD for

$9.55, followed by two further DVDs each month. The series is marketed direct to subscribers on late night US television, and the only source seems to be Garrison himself via www.DeanVariety.com - even Amazon don't appear to offer the DVDs. No copies to hand but member Pat Shields tells us that Volume 1 includes the full seven minute medley between Dino and Bing, wrapped around a montage of Bing's movie songs. Dean's guest list was always impressive and some of the biggest names in the business are represented on the series. The shows are also available on VHS video (NTSC format).

Jack Benny Program Vol. 1 **Critics' Choice CCD 001006D** **$9.99** **USA**

A new DVD featuring two of Jack Benny's half hour shows from the early 50s plus an hour-long special from 1965. One of the half hour shows is the one featuring Bing and George Burns as guests which was originally broadcast on March 21, 1954. The other 30 minute episode features Julie London. The 1965 special has Bob Hope and Elke Sommer as guests and whilst it was originally shown in colour, it is a black and white version on the DVD. I have not seen the DVD myself but it received a scathing review by 'DVD Talk' who said:

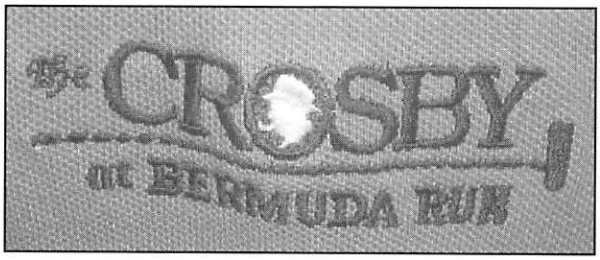
> *"Once again, programming perceived to be public domain has been thrown together without regard to quality and released by fast-buck operators who undermine both the genuine market for such shows and the technological advantages of the DVD format itself."*

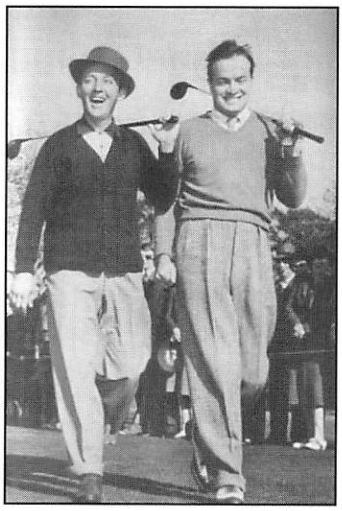
I notice that www.deepdiscount.com are offering the DVD at $5.99.

What's on the Web?

We continue our tracking of pieces of Crosbyana that have turned up via internet auctions this last quarter with several less common items.

Amidst the plethora of Bob Hope material that has been around this year, I was pleasantly surprised to pick up a first edition paperback of Hope's first autobiography from 1941 "They Got Me Covered". With a foreword by Bing and lots of photos from a screen partnership that was then only a year old, I was amazed to find that a bid of around $5 secured my copy.





EBay's site always resonates with any number of the Jim Bean whisky decanters that were produced for Bing's Pro-Am golf tournament, and nice souvenirs they are too. They generally fetch around $30 and as long as the seller packs them well, they should survive the journey to you. Other golfing memorabilia this quarter has included "Bing Crosby Golf Shirt", with logos such as the one shown here. The shirts seem to be part of a job lot and can be bought at a fixed price of $9.99.

Malcolm Macfarlane and I were intrigued by 30 or so reels of tape that were up for auction, described as emanating from the "Bing Crosby Tape Club", which we eventually concluded was the tape subscription service run by member, Arnold Baker some years back - indeed since the format was reel to reel, more years than we care to remember! The seller had no details about the actual content. The set went for around £40 including postage.

And that's all for now. As ever, always interested to hear about anything that you have come across that's new or even just a little out of the ordinary.

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8LP, UK. Tel: 01564 730108 e-mail: ken54@blueyonder.co uk, Website: www.kencrossland.co.uk

(Editor: Many thanks to Ken for his comprehensive roundup. Ken's book "The Man Who Would Be Bing – The Life Story of Michael Holliday" has a target publication date of 19 April. We shall include a flier for use by those of you wanting to purchase this with our next issue. A 3CD set – provisionally titled "The Story Of My Life – The Michael Holliday Anthology" – will come out on the same date.)

LEEDS 2003

The answers to the quiz were: - 1. Road to Singapore 2. All three have the word 'mother' in the title 3. Deanna Durbin 4. 1940 5. Nine years (1930 and 1939) 6. a) The Lee Gordon Singers 7. All are film title-songs 8. b) Isham Jones 9. "I'll Be Seeing You" (1944) 10. a) A radio show (May 1951)

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gives a Centennial Tribute to Bing

Back in September 2001, the ICC wrote a long and detailed letter to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills noting that the Academy had recently hosted a tribute to Gary Cooper. We suggested that a similar tribute to Bing in 2003 might be appropriate. No reply was received but it was with great pleasure that we read about a major tribute to Bing on November 21 hosted by Michael Feinstein in the Academy's Samuel Goldwyn Theater. Did our letter play a part? Who knows, but Judy Schmid was at the event and sends us details.

What a star-studded evening tribute to Bing on Friday evening, November 21, at the Academy's Samuel Goldwyn auditorium! As one of many fans invited by Mrs Crosby, I was able to swing a last-minute trip to LA from the frozen north of Syracuse, NY, USA, and arrived in time for the pre-tribute reception to be in full swing!

As I walked in with Mrs Crosby, her friend Rick and her guests from Texas (charming and comfortable people, all!), our first Crosby-connection was a warm greeting for Mrs C by Linda Hope, who was also just arriving. Hugs all around - and then the cameras started flashing! I scooted inside as Mrs C began to work the crowd and was VERY happy to see a familiar face or two - Bob DeFlores and Ron Hall were there snacking on sumptuous hors d'oeuvres. Other familiar faces popped up in the very crowded and festive room: Buddy Bregman - he insists on calling me "Crazy Judy" - I have NO idea why! - Leonard Maltin, who's been to film festivals in Syracuse and remembered our correspondence... Rich Little and his new bride, who also remembered meeting me and so many other fans at Gonzaga!

Mary Carlisle with Bing in 'Here Is My Heart'

Other celebrities in the room of note: Dennis Weaver, who is tall, lanky, and gracious. "You, too, are a Crosby fan?" I asked him as he was happy to pose for a photo. "All my life!" he said with a smile. Mrs C, meanwhile, was 'working the crowd' and greeting so many people. In a brief moment where we passed each other, she grabbed my arm and said "Judy - look - it's Mary Carlisle!" What a beautiful woman Miss Carlisle is - she was so happy to meet another Bing-fan.

And then Michael Feinstein arrived - I was unable to meet him and get a quote for the ICC magazine, as he was VERY busy talking to AMPAS management and taking care of his guest for the evening, Liza Minelli. Wow - so many people we on the 'birthday bash committee' meeting had tried to contact for Gonzaga who declined our invitations to participate because of other commitments had come out in FORCE for this Hollywood tribute.

The lights flashed, beckoning us to the 1000-seat theater, and we all hurried in. My seat was to be adjacent to those of the Crosby entourage, but some of the other guests had brought a few extra friends, so I sat a few rows back...there was only ONE empty seat in the entire house, and it ended up next to mine...

The lights in the house dimmed and the top-of-the-line equipment (well, it IS Hollywood!) displayed Bing's screen debut in "The King of Jazz" - as soon as the movie scene pulled out of shadow and the crowd recognized a VERY young and ebullient Bing, applause broke out - it was a terrific start! As soon as that scene ended, Mr Feinstein took the podium. He welcomed everyone and said that he had a few prepared notes and then the rest would be 'free form' - he spoke, with deep conviction, of how Bing Crosby was HIS favorite singer, for now and always, and that Bing WAS the best entertainer of the 20th Century. He listed statistics that we're all familiar with...but he said them in a moving way, causing the crowd to react to every number he rattled off. He then introduced Judy Garland's daughter, Liza Minelli, who stood and waved to thunderous applause.

Other movie clips followed..."You're Getting to be a Habit with Me" from the short *Please*. "I Don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance", also from *Please* (Mr Feinstein had introduced this piece telling of how Bing was very involved in writing many of his early songs - and one of his last classic pieces? "Anthem of the Clams")...the "Temptation" scene from *Going Hollywood* and a Crosby festival favorite, Bing's duet with himself from *Here is My Heart*, "June in January".

"Pennies from Heaven"..."Wait till the Sun Shines, Nellie" from *Birth of the Blues*...and "Rhythm on the River" (with a very funny commentary by Mr Feinstein about Wingy Manone and his prosthetic hand, where he used to hide his musician's 'friend', marijuana!) Mr Feinstein then introduced the first of his panelists, Edith Fellowes (from *Pennies from Heaven*), Olga San Juan (from *Blue Skies*) and Mitzi Gaynor (from the 1956 *Anything Goes*). Miss San Juan was fragile but let us all know that she loved working with Bing and that he joked, calling her "Miss San Juan" and her sister, who often visited the movie set in 1946, "Miss San Two" (I think you need to say this aloud to understand the joke!).

Miss Fellowes remarked that, as a 13-year-old girl, she, too, was in love with Bing and that when they began

filming, the fourth of his children with Dixie Lee had just been born [sic]. He told her "I was hoping for a daughter, so I tell you what - let's pretend YOU'RE my little girl!" She also recalled that, after meeting Dixie, she decided that in no way could she break up that family - apparently she had designs on Bing that only a 13-year-old could!

Miss Gaynor, vivacious and clever, was happy to report that Bing had a nickname for her, too - "Brookie". Why "Brookie", Phil Harris asked one day during filming? "Because, when she walks away, her fanny wiggles just like a brook trout!" She had nothing but good things to say about his camaraderie, his professionalism, and his warmth.

More film clips followed: "I'll Capture her Heart" from *Holiday Inn* (with a greeting from Robin Astaire, Fred's wife, as she stood to acknowledge the applause)..."White Christmas"...the pickpocket scene from *Road to Utopia* (whereby the crowd also recognized and applauded Linda Hope)...the mirage scene from *Road to Morocco*...and "You Don't Have to Know the Language" sung by Bing and the Andrews Sisters from *Road to Rio*. I'll add here that every time Bing appeared on the screen, the crowd applauded heartily - and when his guests appeared, such as Fred Astaire or Bob Hope, the applause was also VERY generous.

Bing records with Olga San Juan

Mr. Feinstein then introduced Ray Evans, songwriter, in the house, who bowed to the fans. That allowed him to introduce "Your Own Little House" from *Here Comes the Groom*, followed by "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" from the same film. Surprisingly, Mr Feinstein said that *Mr Music* was one of his favorite Crosby films, which has always been more of a 'sleeper' film for Crosby fans. Nonetheless, the clip featuring Peggy Lee, Bing, and Marge and Gower Champion entertaining us on "Life is So Peculiar" from *Mr Music* came on the screen - and I must admit, a clean, clear copy on a HUGE screen does make the film so much better than watching on a grainy taped copy on a home television! We also saw a clip from *The Country Girl*.

Mr. Feinstein then introduced his next guests - Marge Champion, Nancy Olson, and a late-minute arrival, Stephanie Powers. Miss Champion remarked at how natural a dancer Bing was - he was amazingly graceful and learned steps and movement very, very quickly when her husband choreographed that little scene from *Mr Music*.

Miss Olson said that her first meeting with Bing was one of nervous anticipation because someone close to her had said he was difficult to work with. She announced emphatically that he was NOT difficult - he was pure joy and she considered it the highest honor in her life to do two films with him. She did mention, however, that Bing always kept his heart closed - that there was a tender and vulnerable spot that some men might use to their advantage but that HE kept locked - that didn't make him 'cool' but it made him thoughtful and considerate and just that bit of a mystery that made anyone who worked closely with him know that he was amazingly intelligent and very, very deep.

Miss Powers joked that during their filming of *Stagecoach* she was nervous, as her first meeting with Bing was when she was in costume as the very pregnant young Army wife. She said Bing approached her, patted her padded belly, and said "Don't worry - we'll have that thing out of there in no time" - her laughter at that remark changed their working relationship. She added that her relationship with William Holden, who starred with Bing in *The Country Girl* allowed another story to be shared - he had told her that Bing always amazed him at how prepared he was to play the role he did - and that he, Bill Holden, felt in awe of Bing's work ethic. She also joked from the stage with Mary Frances about the safaris they went on and how Bing would change the lyrics to songs as he prepared meals, usually 'enlivening' the evenings with bawdy words!

The last clips of the evening were from Bing's two final musicals - "Now You Has Jazz" with Louis Armstrong from *High Society* (where Mr Feinstein reminded us that, in 1936, Bing insisted that Louis Armstrong get top billing on the film, which was unheard of in the segregated times of the 1930s)...and "Style" with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin from *Robin & the Seven Hoods*. The crowd loved these two final pieces, applauding often during each entertainers' entrance and completion of their song.

Mr. Feinstein then invited Kathryn and Mary Frances to the stage - now, in this centennial year, many of us have heard or read Mrs Crosby's comments about Bing and their early years. She shared those tales again - and the crowd loved it. She also asked Flip Crosby, Phil's youngest son, to stand, as he was in the house. Mary Frances mentioned that her dad amazed her with his talent - sure, he was 'dad', but...she KNEW there was something extra. She recalled that just before she went out on the stage when the family was "stage dressing", as she called it, for her dad's Broadway show, she sought

out her father's advice on how to prepare for the show and how to settle her nerves. Her father was casually reading the newspaper and drinking a Carnation Instant Breakfast - yes, the anathema to all vocalists - milk products - yet there he was, sipping away. She stomped off, frustrated, where Rosemary Clooney helped calm her nerves. Mary Frances then introduced, from the crowd, Maria and Rafael Ferrer, two of Rosemary Clooney's children.

The evening ended with one more clip from *Mr Music*. Michael Feinstein said that he enjoyed this clip because he couldn't get over the joy in Bing's eyes as he performed with Groucho Marx. The crowd applauded long and heartily as the evening ended and the lights came up.

It took quite a long time for the crowd to dissipate, as many of the celebrities were posing for photos and pausing for autographs. As I waited for Mrs Crosby and her daughter, I chatted with Nick Perito and his wife. I then introduced myself to young Flip Crosby, with whom I'd spoken a few times on the telephone. He, in turn, introduced me to his older brother Phil, who had attended the Birthday Bash at Gonzaga. Cathie Wilson had a big hello for me, and I chatted with Mary Frances, who was surprised that I'd seen her at the Uris Theater in December 1976. "You've been a fan for a while, then?" she asked. "All my life," I shared. She noted that we were close in age - and I mentioned that her mom had a set of photos from my fourth-row vantage point, as I had smuggled in a camera. She promised to take a look at those photos.

All in all...an amazing evening. Crystal clear sound and images of our Bing...warm greetings from 'average' Crosby fans and celebrities alike - I overheard AMPAS management speaking with some Hollywood folks about how Mr. Feinstein was the main 'push' to make this event happen, as he'd been asked by fans to participate in Bing's centennial celebrations. He felt that the Hollywood community, for too long, had ignored Bing's contributions and that he was going to do something about it. Well, Mr. Feinstein, THANK YOU for reminding the people in your circle how important Bing still is - it was a wonderful evening and you were the perfect host.

Judy Schmid

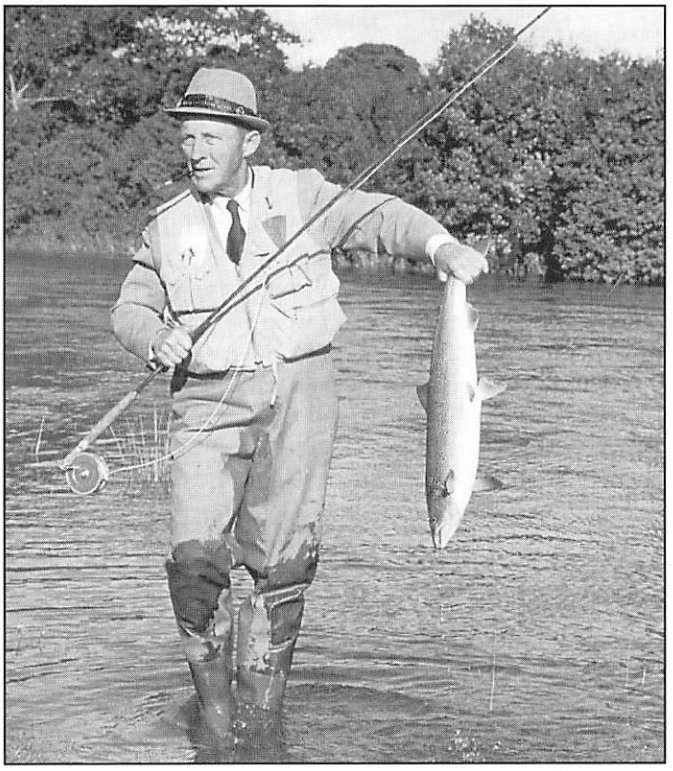
(Editor: What a great report from Judy and how nice to see that Bing has received the major tribute he deserved from the show-business community. We all send our very, very grateful and most sincere thanks to Michael Feinstein for making it happen.

'Lancashire Life' is a substantial glossy magazine which covers social activities in . . . you guessed it, Lancashire in the UK and it was a surprise to find the following article in their September issue.)

Gone fishing . . .

Bing Crosby was born 100 years ago. To celebrate this centenary we recall how one of the world's great stars ended up messing about on a Lake District river.

It is an idyllic moment. Superstar Bing Crosby wades triumphantly from a Lake District river with one that didn't get away. But behind this photograph, captured on a hazy day in 1966, is a rather comical tale. For the singing legend took over a week to make a splash in the Lake District.



The crooner was visiting the region to record a film for an American broadcasting company of him indulging in one of his favourite pastimes, but after a week of casting around he still hadn't caught a thing. The disheartened star went on vacation to Scandinavia [sic] for a month, so when he returned river bailiffs located the fish and pointed him in the right direction. They set down their rods at a stretch of the River Derwent at Armathwaite, between Keswick and Workington, and sure enough Bing caught several trout.

The photographs were taken by freelance photographer Ivor Nicholas who joined the star on location. He said: 'He came for a week and didn't catch a thing. It all had to be authentic so it was a particularly frustrating week but we sat around laughing and joking.

'He was very easy going - marvellous in fact. Most easy to work with. He was a continual joker and a laugh all the time. He was that sort of fellow. It was a great privilege to be asked to photograph him.'

Bing Crosby's career was legendary and he was well known as both a singer and an actor. He made history by having the most number one's ever recorded topping the charts 38 times - 14 more than The Beatles and 20 ahead of hip-swinging Elvis Presley. His Christmas classic 'White Christmas' still regularly appears in the number one spot as the nation's favourite Christmas song. Crosby died on October 14, 1977, aged 74, with more than 2,000 recordings to his name. But while his working life took up a great deal of his time he always enjoyed taking time out on the banks of the river.

We hope you enjoy this nostalgic visit to the riverbank.

Bing and Clay Aiken

With the magazine at the printers, we were able to insert this late item from Greg Van Beek about *American Idol* runner-up Clay Aiken.

Bob Deflores and I have been working with a producer from *Nick at Nite* for the past month for their forthcoming Christmas Special "The Nick at Nite Holiday Special", which premieres November 28th. *American Idol* runner-up Clay Aiken will perform "Little Drummer Boy" / "Peace On Earth" with Bing! Clay will sing the David Bowie part live, while Bing, in an excerpt taken from his 1962 Christmas special (in color), will sing "with" Clay 'The Little Drummer Boy'. They will appear "together" through the magic of special effects...a 59 year old Bing with a 24 year old Clay.

Originally, they wanted to have Clay sing "White Christmas" with Bing, but then asked if Bing ever sang "Little Drummer Boy" besides the version with David Bowie. I told him about the version from the '62 Xmas special— the ONLY other video available of Bing performing the song— so they were thrilled. When Clay learned of this, he immediately wanted to do 'Drummer Boy' instead of 'White Christmas'!

Bob and I spent close to two weeks just tracking down the quad master videotape of this show— which was not in Mrs. Crosby's basement. Bing only had a 16mm b/w film print of the show. Then, another few weeks were spent in negotiations with the owner of the quad tape (Bing sold Bing Crosby Productions in 1971, so the family no longer has sole ownership of many of Bing's TV shows) and with the Crosby family until they all agreed to terms with *Nick at Nite*. It was a lot of work for all of us! A lot of phone calls, FedEx trips, etc. But both Bob and I feel it will be well worth the effort.

Now I know that there are those who will balk at the notion of Bing singing with this kid Clay Aiken, but keep in mind, he's also one of the most popular music acts around today, and his teaming up with Bing will help expose Bing to a much younger generation — the Clay Aiken fan base, and that's a good thing, getting a new generation to see how "cool" Bing really is—what all of us here have known all along! This has the potential to be very big, as there's talk of releasing it as a single to radio and in stores, with the accompanying "music video" for VH-1 and/or MTV to play. IF this happens (and with the relative close proximity to Christmas the CD single & music video may have to wait until next year), it has the potential to put Bing back on the record charts...possibly a hit in the top 10 on the pop charts!

Bing's 1967 guest shot on the Jackie Gleason Show (as part of a *Honeymooners* skit) was also scheduled to be broadcast on the Goodlife cable TV channel during the weekend of November 22-23.

Greg Van Beek

(Editor: By the time you read this, you will know whether the Crosby / Aiken linking has had any impact. It would be very nice to see Bing back in the charts.)

The Fifty Worst Movies Of All Time (and how they got that way)

This book by Harry and Michael Medved was published by Angus & Robertson in 1979 and I found a copy in a second hand shop recently. The 50 worst films include turkeys such as *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster* (1972), *Robot Monster* (1953) and *Swamp Women* (1955) as well as more well known epics such as *The Conqueror* (a John Wayne film from 1956), *The Ambushers* (1966 - Dean Martin as Matt Helm) *Airport 1975* (1974) and the Bob Hope film *Boy, Did I Get A Wrong Number* (1966). Elvis Presley is represented by *Spinout* (1966) and the authors comment "In selecting one of Elvis' motion pictures for the book, the competition was intense."

It's quite an amusing book running to almost 300 pages with many photographs and facts and figures about the films reviewed. But how is this relevant to BING magazine? Well, I am afraid to say that one of Bing's films has been selected! *Say One For Me* (1959) is reviewed over 4 pages with first a selection of the contemporary criticism, exemplified by:

"About as simple and uncerebal as it can get without coming to a dead stop."
(Paul V. Beckley, New York Herald Tribune).

"Pass the cliches . . . a bland blend of religion, sentiment, and song . . .
(Newsweek)

A fairly accurate plot summary follows and then we have the "Unforgettable Performances" section which is rather unkind to Bing and to Debbie Reynolds.

> "With his puffy, sagging cheeks, melting blue eyes, and occasional mellifluous howling, Crosby suggests a faithful old hound, slightly off the scent on one of his last hunts. Even those who get their goose bumps from the hallowed strains of "White Christmas" will only blush at the "entertainment" Bing provides us here."

We are then treated to extracts from the "Immortal Dialogue", the story behind the film and finally "The Balance Sheet" and it seems that "Box-office returns proved a major disappointment, and not even Father Crosby's prayers could prevent the film's losing money."

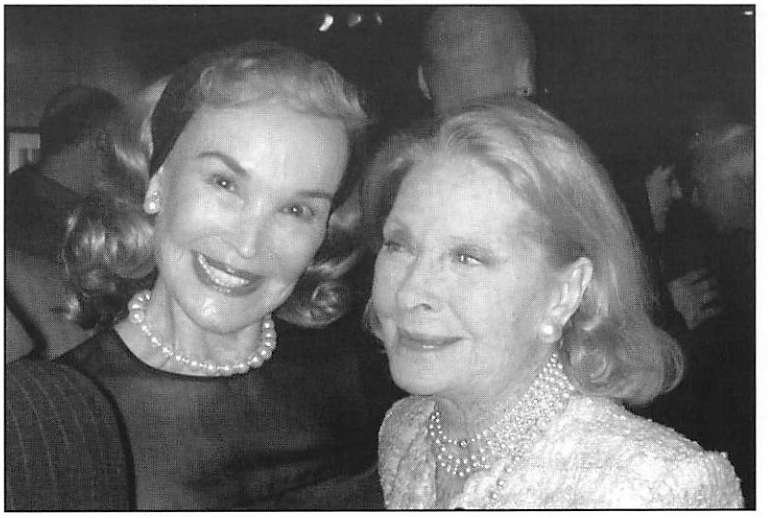
Well, what do we think of these comments? In my view, the film was poorly written and put together. It dragged in parts as it tried to appeal to both young and old. Bing looked like a man 15 years older than the actor who had starred 3 years previously in *High Society* but it was not all bad. There were some nice scenes and I particularly liked Bing's singing of "I Couldn't Care Less" as well as his duet of the title song with Ms. Reynolds. I enjoyed Bing's singing of "The Secret of Christmas" too although the presentation of it was rather silly.

Looking back now, it seemed to be a lapse of judgement on Bing's part to be involved and I can only

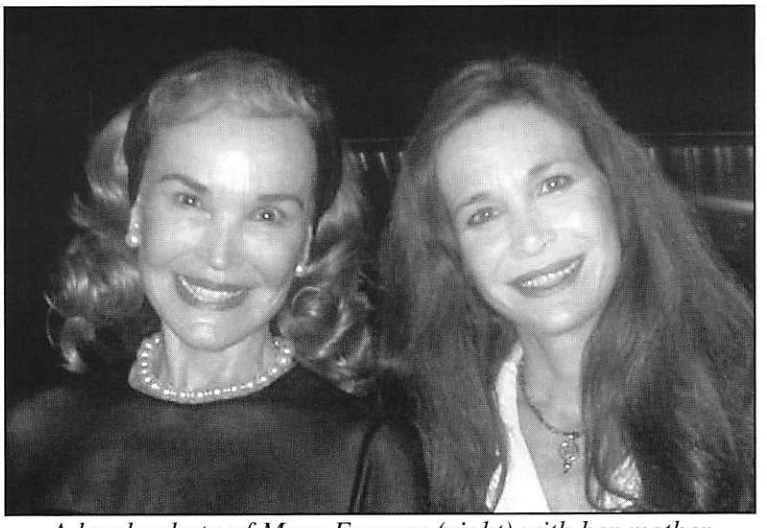
conclude that he was persuaded to take part in the hope that the film would put over good-living messages to the young. However, I felt that Bing quickly restored his movie reputation with *High Time* in 1960 which was far more entertaining.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Not only has Judy Schmid written a great report on the recent Academy tribute (see page 53) but she has also sent us some photos and we have the pleasure in reproducing three of these below:



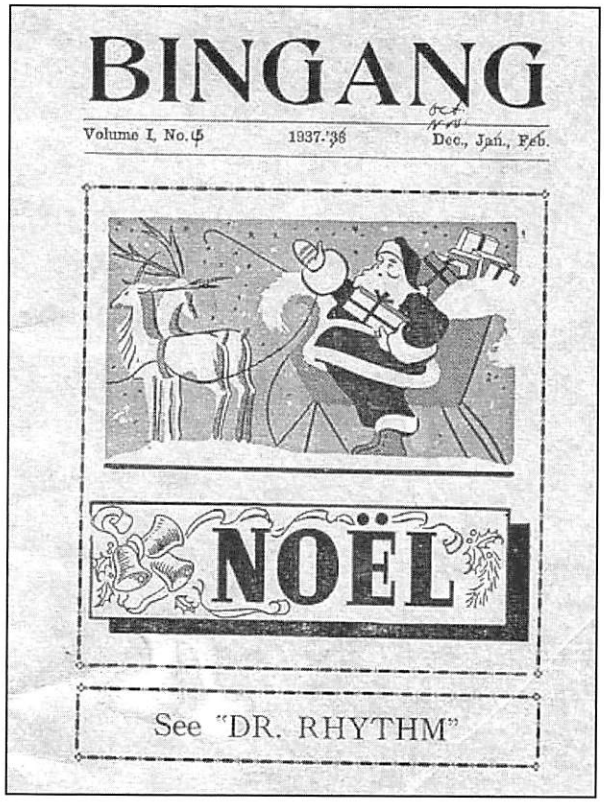
Mary Carlisle (right) with Kathryn Crosby



A lovely photo of Mary Frances (right) with her mother

Mitzi Gaynor smiles for the camera

The Earliest Surviving BINGANG?



BINGANG

Volume I, No. 5 1937-'38 Dec., Jan., Feb.

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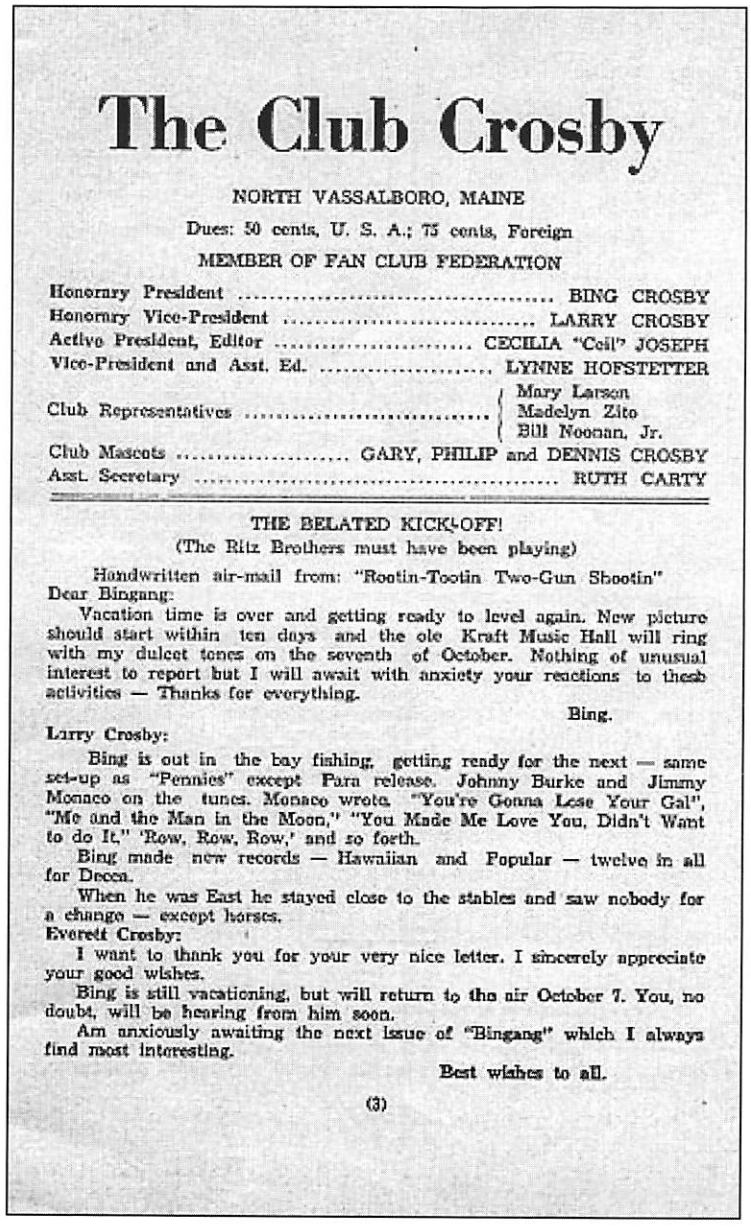
See "DR. RHYTHM"



The Club Crosby

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Club Mascots ..... GARY, PHILIP and DENNIS CROSBY
Asst. Secretary ..... RUTH CARTY

THE BELATED KICK-OFF!

(The Ritz Brothers must have been playing)

Handwritten air-mail from: "Rootin-Tootin Two-Gun Shootin"

Dear Bingang:

Vacation time is over and getting ready to level again. New picture should start within ten days and the ole Kraft Music Hall will ring with my dulcet tones on the seventh of October. Nothing of unusual interest to report but I will await with anxiety your reactions to these activities — Thanks for everything.

Bing.

Larry Crosby:

Bing is out in the bay fishing, getting ready for the next — same set-up as "Pennies" except Para release. Johnny Burke and Jimmy Monaco on the tunes. Monaco wrote "You're Gonna Lose Your Gal", "Me and the Man in the Moon," "You Made Me Love You, Didn't Want to do It," 'Row, Row, Row,' and so forth.

Bing made new records — Hawaiian and Popular — twelve in all for Decca.

When he was East he stayed close to the stables and saw nobody for a change — except horses.

Everett Crosby:

I want to thank you for your very nice letter. I sincerely appreciate your good wishes.

Bing is still vacationing, but will return to the air October 7. You, no doubt, will be hearing from him soon.

Am anxiously awaiting the next issue of "Bingang" which I always find most interesting.

Best wishes to all.

(3)

Greg Van Beek sent your Editor an interesting e-mail recently:

"As you may know, the late Pat Sullivan's Bing Crosby collection is being auctioned off on eBay. I recently won a few of the auctions, and, having mentioned Club Crosby and that we're still going strong, the person auctioning off the items (Cheryle Wilson), sent along as a "bonus" with my last purchase, Volume 1, No. 4, the Oct./Nov./December 1937 issue of BINGANG magazine! Needless to say, I was overwhelmed by this, what surely must be the (or at least one of the) earliest examples of the magazine in our archives."

I'm sure Greg is right. Does anyone have an older copy of BINGANG?

Finally, to come right up-to-date, our sincere thanks to Doug Heinle for preparing the club's new logo.

Bing Crosby
-Hollywood-

December 2, 1963

Dear Gord:

Of course I'll be delighted to do the tape interview with you along the lines that you suggest. In other words, you'll send me some questions and I will provide answers on tape and send you the tape.

I will leave some pauses between my answers, so that you will be able to cut in the questions and in this way put together an interview suitable for your purposes.

This method of procedure would be infinitely more preferable than a telephone interview - both from the standpoint of quality and from personal feeling.

So I'll be awaiting receipt of your questions and just as soon as I am doing some taping, I'll provide the answers thereto.

Happy to hear that everything's going along well for you and that your young ones are coming on in good shape.

I suppose with Christmas hard upon us now, you're going to have a hectic two or three weeks. I know we are here.

All best regards to you and your family

As ever,

Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm
Mr. Gord Atkinson
1159 Adirondack Drive
Ottawa 5, Ontario, Canada

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

Designed & Printed by City Printers (Chester-le-Street) Ltd., Ropery Lane, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ Tel: 0191 3883255